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**The Role of Evangelicalism in the Formation of
Nineteenth-Century Ulster Protestant Cultural Identity.
(1859-1885)**

By

Philomena Sutherland, B.A. (Hons.)

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the
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Abstract

The Role of Evangelicalism in the Formation of Nineteenth-Century Ulster Protestant Cultural Identity.

This thesis considers the drive to commemorate within Ulster Protestantism. It focuses on Londonderry between 1859 and 1886 with particular attention paid to the role of evangelicalism, prominent during the relevant period. The assessment is made against the historic backdrop of the Ulster Revival (1859), disestablishment of the Church of Ireland (1869) and the threat of home rule (1880s).

In order to gauge more accurately the contribution of religion, a multidisciplinary approach was adopted. Insights from anthropology, political science and sociology were used to complement the primary historical approach to the subject. The subject is approached from two angles, focussing initially on a historical and biographical study of William Johnston (1829-1902), a representative figure who illustrates wider trends and linkages in Ulster's political world and secondly on the city of Londonderry and its anniversary commemorations, and on the important intersection between the two.

The discourse from the sermons preached at the 12 August and 18 December commemorations, organised by the Apprentice Boys of Londonderry Association, were analysed using Ninian Smart's *Dimensions of the Sacred* as an analytical tool and were compared to the discourse in the secular events. This helped to

clarify the nature of the outlook held by the protagonists and establish the extent to which it had a religious framework.

The catalytic role of evangelicalism seemed evident as the synthesis between Loyalism, Orangeism and evangelicalism was explored against political chronology and in relation to covenantalism. A change in direction and a new political agenda with strong religious conviction became an aspect of Loyalism. This change was reflected in ritual that underwent significant development in the period. This was considered in relation to two important relevant scholarly concepts that related to identity, the 'invention of tradition' and 'civil religion'. The period between 1859 and 1885 proved pivotal in the development of Ulster Protestant cultural identity.

Abbreviations, Terms and Usage

LS	Londonderry Sentinel
BNL	Belfast News-Letter
DP	Downshire Protestant
DR	Downpatrick Recorder
Inquiry, Belfast	Report of Commissioners of Inquiry into the origin and character of the riots in Belfast, in July and September, House of Commons 1857.
Inquiry, Londonderry	Report of Inquiry, 1869, into riots and disturbances in Londonderry, House of Commons (1870)
Hansard	hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons – Hansard, House of Commons Debates, Nineteenth Century.

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INTRODUCTION

For more than two centuries, the rituals of commemoration in Ulster have caused conflict in communities divided by religious and political affiliation. These rituals relate to identity within the communities and this thesis focuses on the role of religion in establishing that identity and in its manifestation in the streets of Londonderry¹. Exploring the relationship between evangelicalism and the drive to commemorate is a central aspect of the study as is the relationship between the Orangeism of constitutional Loyalism and the religio-political agenda of the Orange Order which impacted on the expression of the rites from the mid 1860s. (Religio-political means the political agenda which emanates from religious conviction.) The study focuses on Londonderry between 1859 and 1885 and the role of evangelical religion, prominent during the relevant period. Emphasis is placed on a more militant strain of evangelicalism that developed in Britain and Ireland in the late 1820s. It emerged with a more fundamentalist attitude to Scripture, regarding the world as 'under God's judgment and heading for imminent catastrophe'.² While the early nineteenth century tended to be moderately anti-Catholic, believing that Roman Catholics³ would eventually realise their error, a more dogmatic, premillennialist, Protestantism came to the fore in the prelude to Emancipation.⁴ Adherents were particularly prone to Protestant organisation in strongly anti-Catholic societies and loyalist organisations. This thesis concentrates on the worldview of key players.

¹ Londonderry/Derry – these names are used interchangeably as in nineteenth-century discourse.

² J. Wolfe, *The Protestant Crusade in Great Britain, 1829-1860* (Clarendon, 1991), p.30. Protestantism is the term used for religion derived from the Protestant Reformation.

³ The term Roman Catholic is used as well as Catholic. It was used in nineteenth-century commemorative discourse without exception and not in a derogatory way.

⁴ J. Wolfe, *The Protestant Crusade in Great Britain, 1829-1860* (Clarendon, 1991), p.30.

The role of evangelicalism in Protestant identity is approached from two angles, focussing initially on a historical and biographical study of William Johnston (1829-1902), a representative figure who illustrated wider trends and linkages in Ulster's political world. Secondly it targets the city of Londonderry and its anniversary commemorations, and the important intersection between the two. The assessment is made against the historic backdrop of the Ulster revival (1859), disestablishment of the Church of Ireland (1869) and the threat of home rule (1880s).

From the outset it was clear that it would be challenging to evaluate the diverse influences of religion in the development of commemoration. Only the central aspect of the church service could be regarded as official religion. The whole process of street parades, secular meetings and social events could be easily regarded as a mixture of the civic and political. A methodology, therefore, had to be put in place to capture the importance of the religious connotations visible in the overall ceremonial to ensure the role of religion would not be undervalued. In order more accurately to gauge its contribution, a multidisciplinary approach was adopted. Insights from anthropology, political science and sociology were used to complement the primary historical approach to the subject.

Smart's 'Dimensions of the Sacred' were used as an analytic tool to assist in worldview analysis. These 'dimensions' are a means of studying religions and ideologies. The thesis examines how values and beliefs are expressed in actions, laws, symbols and organisations.⁵ Instead of concentrating on one characteristic of a particular group, which can give an unbalanced view of that group's outlook

⁵ N. Smart, *Dimensions of the Sacred: An Anatomy of the World's Beliefs* (London: Harper Collins, 1996), p.3; N. Smart, *Worldviews: Crosscultural Explorations of Human Beliefs*, 3rd edn (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2000), pp.1-9.

on life, this device allows for the organisation of information into eight aspects – ritual, material, doctrinal, narrative, experiential, ethical, and social – which, when combined, can provide a clear indication of how people perceived the world. These categories and how they interact reveal the beliefs and values of a group and establish whether, and to what extent, their worldview had a religious framework.⁶ The importance of ritual in a group regarding itself as affiliated to official conservative Protestantism, not normally associated with ritualistic practices, can suggest a covenantal link, as explained more fully in Chapter Three. The material dimension can be reflected in, for example, the banners of the rituals. Similarly, the doctrinal category can reveal whether the group favoured denominational doctrines or more general, ‘essential’ doctrines, such as those of the Evangelical Alliance, in their ceremonies. The narrative category can establish how biblical stories and historic myths impacted on their lives, merging and interacting to encourage the belief that they had become a ‘chosen people’. The ethical dimension can provide a strong motivation to activism in support of what are perceived to be the ‘right’ values. The dimension of religious experience can draw on perceptions of being favoured by God as a ‘chosen people’ as well as the confidence imparted by evangelical conversion. It can combine with the ethical dimension, enhancing conviction and imparting a higher justification for action. The organisational category can illustrate such matters as the importance or otherwise of clerical leadership in the association. Smart added a political/economic category to the original seven in his schema because this was an area which frequently affected or was affected by the other categories. This category was used here as it seemed particularly significant in the Ulster context. Therefore, while Chapter Three focuses on the doctrinal, narrative, ethical and

⁶ Ibid.

experiential, Chapter Four on the social and organisational and Chapter Five on the ritual and material dimensions, the political dimension features in all chapters.

Establishing the presence of evangelicalism is not straightforward. It is a concept which is notoriously difficult to define because of its complexity and diversity.

Regarded by most historians as a popular international movement that has had a discernible presence in Britain since the 1730s, its amorphous and ambivalent qualities have allowed it to be interpreted as both a unifying and divisive phenomenon within society and can exhibit both radical and conservative tendencies. Emphasising its various and contradictory guises, scholarly argument has given rise to opposing schools of thought about its origins. Some regard it as a product of the Reformation, refined through Puritanism to find eventual expression in eighteenth-century religious revival.⁷ In the Irish context, for instance, connections between dissent and evangelicalism have been suggested in the personal conversions experienced in the Ulster Six Mile Water revival of 1625.⁸ In opposition to this are the arguments of David Bebbington and Mark Noll which suggest discontinuity and the evolution of a different species of evangelicalism in the eighteenth century.⁹ These and others with similar views believe evangelicalism broke firmly from its past as a result of a dislocation of religious, political, social and economic factors.¹⁰ Specific to Ulster, Gibbon and Miller have linked the growth of evangelicalism to changes in the regional

⁷ J. Coffey, 'Puritanism, Evangelicalism and the Evangelical Protestant Tradition' in *The Emergence of Evangelicalism: Exploring Historical Continuities*, ed. by M. A. G. Haykin and K. J. Stewart, (Nottingham Inter-Varsity Press, 2008), pp.252-278.

⁸ J. Wolfe, *God and Greater Britain: Religion and National Life in Britain and Ireland 1843-1945* (London: Routledge, 1994), p.23; D. Hempton and M. Hill, *Evangelical Protestantism in Ulster society, 1740-1890* (Routledge, 1992), p.5.

⁹ D. W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s*. (London: Unwin Hyman 1989), pp.43, 74; M. A. Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 2004), pp.48-54.

¹⁰ E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (Harmondsworth: Pelican, 1968 (1963)).

economy.¹¹ But, of course, these theories are not mutually exclusive. Wolffe, for example, describes it as 'a new mood and style in Christianity' drawing on 'an eclectic range of influences from the past' whilst combining them with 'innovative features', resulting in a religious manifestation with 'no obvious historical precedents'.¹²

In attempting to define evangelicalism, Bebbington highlights certain common attributes: 'conversionism, the belief that lives need to be changed; activism, the expression of the gospel in effort; biblicism, a particular regard for the Bible;' and 'crucicentrism, a stress on the sacrifice of Christ on the cross'.¹³ This model has become widely accepted as a useful analytical tool and is regarded in Hempton and Hill's *Evangelical Protestantism in Ulster Society* as being sensitive to the problems of defining evangelicalism.¹⁴ Pat Mitchel, in his study of evangelicalism in twentieth-century Ulster, also uses the Bebbington model. To him it acknowledges the essential personality of evangelicalism as being dynamic and fluid, imprecisely interconnected through shared beliefs, a common heritage and broadly similar objectives.¹⁵ A more theological approach was taken by John Stott, a leading present-day evangelical practitioner. In *Evangelical Truth*, he provided a 'Trinitarian rubric' which defines evangelicalism with emphasis on 'the revealing initiative of God the Father, the redeeming works of God the Son, and the transforming ministry of the Holy Spirit' with other important but less essential qualities like conversion, fellowship and evangelism finding a subordinate place in

¹¹ P. Gibbon, *The Origins of Ulster Unionism: The Formation of Popular Protestant Politics and Ideology in Nineteenth Century Ireland* (Manchester: U.P., 1975), p.143; D. W. Miller, 'Presbyterianism and modernization in Ulster', *Past and Present*, no. 80 (1978, Aug.), pp.66-90.

¹² Wolffe, *God and Greater Britain*, p.2.

¹³ Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, pp.2-17.

¹⁴ Hempton and Hill, *Evangelical Protestantism in Ulster*, p.14

¹⁵ P. Mitchel, *Evangelicalism and National Identity in Ulster, 1921-1998* (Oxford: OUP, 2003), p.107.

the overall scheme.¹⁶ He regarded the Bible, particularly the gospels, as being foundational truths of evangelicalism. However Derek Tidball, another prominent present-day evangelical, believes 'evangelicalism is as much about an ethos and infrastructure, a complex network of trans-denominational organisations, societies, events and paraphernalia, as about a doctrinal position'.¹⁷ He appears to agree with Mitchel that 'evangelicalism represents a style, or religious culture, loosely connected to a theological core'.¹⁸

The overall value of Bebbington's model is summarised by John Wolffe in that for him it provides 'a sound middle path between the crudities of classifying by institutional affiliation and the problems inherent in an over-rigorous doctrinal definition'.¹⁹ Wolffe does, however, emphasise the importance of the quality of individualism which he regards as not only indicative of the outlook of the characters involved but also of 'the distinctive culture of the movement as a whole'.²⁰

In this thesis, consideration is given to whether a further quality, Protestant defence, might reasonably be viewed as a complement to Bebbington's model when evangelicalism is viewed in its evangelical form in the political context of Ulster.

¹⁶ J. R. W. Stott, *Evangelical Truth* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1991), p.28.

¹⁷ D. Tidball, *Who are the Evangelicals? Tracing the roots of the modern movement* (London: Marshall Pickering, 1994), p.13.

¹⁸ Mitchel, *Evangelicalism and National Identity*, p.107.

¹⁹ J. Wolffe, *Evangelicals, Women and Community in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Open University Study Guide* (Milton Keynes: Open University, 1994), p.19.

²⁰ *Ibid.* p.22.

A key historical analysis that focuses on evangelicalism is David Hempton and Myrtle Hill's *Evangelical Protestantism in Ulster Society 1740-1890*.²¹ Hempton and Hill explore evangelicalism across denominations because denominational studies, according to them, have tended to mask its significance as a movement. They emphasise its ability to move from splinter group to voluntary society and infiltrate every aspect of institutional religion. They highlight the fact that any attempt to analyse Irish Protestant psychology must consider the 'over-riding sense of moral responsibility with which evangelicals were imbued, and which blurred the distinctions between religious and political activities'.²² It helped to build bridges between denominations, between church, laity and voluntary organisations. Furthering its connections with Great Britain and helping to establish a Protestant identity was caught up with loyalty to the British way of life. Ultimately, in their opinion, the greatest contribution of evangelicalism to Ulster ideology 'was the sheer vigour of its anti-Catholicism'.²³

Central to this thesis is the inter-relationship between the concepts of anti-Catholicism and evangelicalism and between religion and politics in nineteenth-century Ulster. However, contemporary sociological studies can provide insight. In some accounts of the present day interaction between communities in the North, religion is seen as a label that disguises other divisions. The current consensus is that the conflict is primarily ethno-national with other factors merely reinforcing the divide. J. McGarry and B. O'Leary's *Explaining Northern Ireland* is representative of this interpretative trend.²⁴ Liz Fawcett argues for a cultural position for religion. For her, it is reflected in cultural symbolism, ethno-nationalism and boundary maintenance rather than being an active force in its own right. Steve Bruce,

²¹ Hempton and Hill, *Evangelical Protestantism in Ulster*, p.xi.

²² Ibid, p.81

²³ Ibid, p.183.

²⁴ J. McGarry and B. O'Leary, *Explaining Northern Ireland* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995).

however, regards the Northern Ireland conflict as a religious conflict and emphasises 'the central role of evangelicalism in Ulster unionism'.²⁵

Claire Mitchell also argues effectively that the relevance of religion is beyond labels and signifiers and has its own political and social significance. She believes that religion's political significance results from the fact that it is integrally bound up with power relationships and is the dominant boundary marker between communities. Moreover, she argues that it provides the resources to distinguish between in-groups and out-groups, and that religious rituals are one of these resources. Her view is that religious ideology (religiously derived but non-theological concepts of self and other) informs communal identification and that theology and doctrine help constitute the meanings of group identity and politics for some Protestants.²⁶ Her argument suggests that what remains in the present day is a structure infused with religious meaning which does not necessarily relate to present day religiosity. The purpose of this thesis is to investigate the extent to which this infusion was the result of evangelical religion in the later nineteenth century and how such infusion took place.

As with Hempton and Hill, most studies of anti-Catholicism and evangelicalism in Ulster, relating to both the present-day and periods of Ulster's history, reflect a combination of theological and political circumstances. These are based on the facts that Protestants regarded the Catholic religion as erroneous and potentially dangerous to their spiritual well being just as they thought that being surrounded by an overwhelming majority of Catholics was similarly dangerous to their physical

²⁵ S. Bruce, *God Save Ulster* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), p.249; L. Fawcett, *Religion, Ethnicity and Social Change* (Basingstoke, Macmillan Press, 2000).

²⁶ C. Mitchell, *Religious Identity and Politics in Northern Ireland* (Ashgate, 2006), p.1.

well being.²⁷ Often quoted, and particularly highlighted by Mitchell, is Frank Wright's seminal article 'Protestant ideology and politics in Ulster'.²⁸ In this, he provided an acute analysis of the relationship between religious ideas and political identity which, he argued, gave rise to the ideology of Unionism. His view was that while religious ideas may have been important for some, they had greater meaning in their political context. Interaction between the two increased the relevance of both concepts. He argued that the 'Protestant' issues under heated debate, such as opposing the Roman Catholic education system or denouncing interference with street preachers, would never have attained the significance they did were it not for their underlying socio-economic and political meaning.²⁹ These ideas were developed in a later work on sectarianism.³⁰

Frank Wright's theory about sectarianism, David Miller's work on the contractarian mindset and conditional loyalty and A. T. Q. Stewart's ideas about the atavistic reaction to circumstances as a result of folk memory provide complementary studies on the rise of sectarianism primarily as a result of colonial settlement.³¹ It is argued that although religion has an important place in 'settler ideology', it was a degraded form removed from Smart's 'experiential' dimension. Frank Wright, as one of his main themes in *Two Lands on One Soil: Ulster Politics before Home Rule*, maintained that religious leaders like the evangelicals Thomas Drew, Hugh Hanna and William Johnston (key characters in this thesis) adopted their view of

²⁷ Bruce, *God Save Ulster*; J. Brewer and G. Higgins, *Anti-Catholicism in Northern Ireland 1600-1998: the mote and the beam* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998); I. McBride, *Scripture Politics: Ulster Presbyterianism and Irish Radicalism in the Late Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998); Mitchel, *Evangelicalism and National Identity*.

²⁸ Hempton and Hill, *Evangelical Protestantism in Ulster*, p.182; Mitchel, *Evangelicalism and National Identity*, p.144; Mitchell, *Religious Identity and Politics*, p.9.

²⁹ F. Wright, 'Protestant ideology and politics in Ulster', *Journal of European Sociology*, 14, (1973), p.229.

³⁰ F. Wright, *Two Lands on One Soil: Ulster Politics before Home Rule* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1996), p.3.

³¹ Wright, *Two Lands on One Soil*, p.3; D. Miller, *Queen's Rebels: Ulster Loyalism in Historical Perspective* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1978), p.5; A.T.Q. Stewart, *The Narrow Ground: the Roots of Conflict in Ulster*, revised edn (Aldershot: 1993), pp.184-5.

Catholic organisation as an ontological threat to Protestants as a result of settler ideology.³² He believed that Protestant theological ideas were 'progressively deformed' as they became distanced from their original relationship between God and believer and transformed into a preoccupation with the 'sins, ignorance and unsavable nature of papists and popery'. Religious concepts, he argued, were used to affirm ideas about relationships between Protestants and Catholics and these ideas reflected the ideology of colonial situations:

- (i) 'the continuous and total enmity of Catholics and Catholicism to Protestants and Protestantism';
- (ii) 'the unity of purpose of all political manifestations of all forms of Catholic self-organisation, outward appearances notwithstanding';
- (iii) 'the justification of the Protestant society in Ireland as an absolute';
- (iv) 'the need for pan-Protestant solidarity to counter Catholic self-organisation';
- (v) 'the affirmation of the timeless and inevitable continuity of the conflict between Protestant and Catholic'.³³

Nineteenth-century historians also relate to this concept. Sean Farrell in his study of nineteenth-century violence argues sectarianism results from ritualised violence arising from assertion of Protestant ascendancy and Catholic reaction, resonant of Wright's circular model of sectarianism.³⁴ Catherine Hirst accepts the colonial argument as a general background to her study of the riots in nineteenth-century Belfast. Her main argument - that religion was little more than an ethnic marker in a political conflict for and against Irish nationalism - follows the current trend of

³² Wright, *Two Lands on One Soil*, p.20.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ S. Farrell, *Riots and Rituals: Sectarian Violence and Political Culture in Ulster, 1784-1886* (Kentucky: U.P., 2000), p.185.

ethnonationalism.³⁵ However, reducing evangelical religion, a vital 'experiential' concept, to something which merely gives an edge to already established issues underplays the fact that evangelicalism had a significant impact in this period not only in Ulster but in areas where there was no settler ideology such as England. Moreover, anti-Catholicism had a wider application than simply within colonial situations.

John Wolfe argues that nineteenth-century anti-Catholicism was not only an established aspect of popular culture in Britain but had a place in political theory inasmuch as Protestantism was integral to any discussion of the constitution, the establishment of the Church of England and the maintenance of the union with Ireland.³⁶ It was also an aspect of evangelicalism, generally. However, this element increased as a result of the more militant evangelicalism in both Britain and Ireland from the late 1820s. Anti-Catholicism was deeply rooted in evangelical identity and ideology and issues such as the advance of Ultramontanistism, the political crisis of Irish Protestants in the late 1820s and early 1830s, the need for a focus for the Conservative party in its bid for recovery after 1832, the Maynooth crisis of 1845, and the 'Papal Aggression' of 1850-1 all reinforced the perception of the Roman Catholic threat. Issues which caused alarm in the later half of the century included the growth of Anglican ritualism in the 1860s and 1870s, the Irish disestablishment crisis, the publication of the Syllabus of Errors (1864) and the Vatican decrees of the 1870s. These all increased the level of anti-Catholicism at frequent intervals.³⁷ These issues were in addition to the hostile reaction to Irish immigration which often manifested itself in the growth of Protestant associations and public support for them. However, Wolfe's analyses of support for Protestant

³⁵ C. Hirst, *Religion, Politics and Violence in Nineteenth Century Belfast* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2002), p.189.

³⁶ Wolfe, *Protestant Crusade*, p.2.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 290, 305.

associations in both Britain and North America suggests that they were motivated by 'genuine theological conviction' rather than 'sublimated racialism' and this strengthened the link between anti-Catholicism and evangelicalism.³⁸

However, the existence of genuine religious conviction and the centrality of the relationship between God and believer are not inconsistent with the existence of settler ideology in Ulster. Rather, these underlying perceptions may have been overlaid by evangelical beliefs and values thereby increasing their potency and evoking an 'experiential' and 'ethical' justification for activism. Moreover, the underlying settler ideology may have been a contributory factor in the relative success of evangelical unity in Ulster compared to other areas where evangelicalism was well established.

Covenantal evangelicalism is particularly significant in Ulster and results in the greatest intransigence in outlook.³⁹ Wright argued that this type of ideological perspective sharpened the conflict in Ulster.⁴⁰ Though covenantalism is generally associated with the Presbyterian tradition, Wright used William Johnston (1829-1902), as well as Ian Paisley (b.1926), as an exemplar to illustrate the covenantal strand of evangelicalism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Johnston, however, belonged to the Anglican tradition. Donald Akenson, in his study of covenantalism in colonial situations in South Africa, Israel and Ulster, believed that this Presbyterian concept became 'diffused throughout the larger Protestant

³⁸ J. Wolfe, *Anti-Catholicism and Evangelical Identity in Britain and the United States, 1830-1860*, in *Evangelicalism: Comparative Studies of Popular Protestantism in North America, the British Isles and Beyond 1700-1900*, ed. by M. Noll, D.W. Bebbington and G.A. Rawlyk, (Oxford: 1994), pp.185-6.

³⁹ D. Miller, *Queen's Rebels*; D. H. Akenson, *God's Peoples: Covenant and Land in South Africa, Israel and Ulster* (Cornell University Press, 1992); Brewer, *Anti Catholicism in Northern Ireland*.

⁴⁰ Wright, 'Protestant Ideology'.

community' after the 1859 Ulster revival.⁴¹ In this thesis, however, consideration is also given to diffusion taking place before this date. The way in which this strand was nurtured through evangelicalism and cultivated through Loyalism is an important aspect of the study.

A more recent study that considers covenantalism is Gladys Ganiel's *Evangelicalism and Conflict in Northern Ireland*. Ganiel uses a multidimensional and multidisciplinary approach to the study of religion in twentieth-century Northern Ireland. She uses anthropological approaches to religion to provide a conceptual framework for insights into religion, conflict and transition. She also highlights the difference between various types of evangelicalism and the importance of the quality of evangelical activism in her analysis.⁴² She agrees with Wright's 'Ideology' on the importance of covenantal Calvinism within evangelicalism and argues that it provides a perceived divine justification for socio-political power and the belief that Protestants were a 'chosen people'.⁴³ Ganiel also points out that this covenantal Calvinism justifies violence and provides a theoretical justification, when necessary, for opposing the British state.⁴⁴ Ganiel divides present-day evangelicals into four categories, one of which is traditional (covenantal) evangelicals.⁴⁵ However, in Chapter Two of this thesis the complexity of the issue is emphasised as there was more than one mode of covenantal evangelicalism.

Primary material analysed in the thesis came from research in newspaper sources supplemented by manuscript material. Chapter One draws on Johnston's own

⁴¹ Akenson, *God's Peoples*, p.148.

⁴² G Ganiel, *Evangelicalism and conflict in Northern Ireland* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp.42-49.

⁴³ Ibid, p.45.

⁴⁴ Ibid, p.46.

⁴⁵ Ibid, p.7.

newspaper, the *Downshire Protestant*, his papers and diaries as well as Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland (GOLI) reports and wider newspaper coverage in Britain and Canada. Chapter Two refers to early poetry, biographical and autobiographical material of key figures, and almanacs and reports relating to Londonderry. It also draws on Ulster newspapers, church debates and conference transactions. Chapters Three, Four and Five make use of newspaper accounts of the commemorative events, the reports of the House of Commons inquiry into the 1869 and 1883 riots in Londonderry, GOLI reports, minutes and autobiographical material.

Key points for consideration in the thesis are:

- the relationship between covenantal perceptions and evangelical activism;
- the extent to which anti-Catholicism might be related to evangelicalism as opposed to settler ideology;
- whether evangelical religion played a significant role in the drive to commemorate, or whether the ritual was a result mainly of settler ideology;
- the extent to which Protestant unity was a reality – whether it was mainly colonial defensiveness or whether it was affected by the concept of evangelical unity;
- the nature of the inter-relationship between religion and politics - whether it might be driven by religious ethics or whether it was merely a marker in a purely political contest;
- the significance of the evangelical clerical role in commemorative events;
- the extent to which religion permeated the nineteenth-century Ulster Protestant worldview;

- the significance of the period between 1859 and 1885 in the 'invention of tradition';
- the extent to which civil religion was a component in cultural identity.

These key questions are explored in the subsequent chapters which engage with the identity of Ulster Protestantism from different perspectives. The main argument, however, is that religion acts as a catalyst. It is a destabilising element, the reaction achieved depending on the nature of the other elements present at the time. As the elements within the formula differ, so does the ensuing reaction. It is, however, proposed that on occasion evangelicalism actually interacts itself with other elements, such as Loyalism and Orangeism, and changes in character. These reactions are explored in the following chapters.

Chapter One analyses the worldview of the evangelical William Johnston and his milieu. He was a revered Orange leader and, although very much an individual, provides a useful point of reference for analysing a certain mindset that embraced both religion and politics, regarding them as inextricably linked. The chapter looks at his formative influences, his own values and principles, his views on commemoration and his political career. It highlights his activism and his drive for Protestant unity. It also takes the focus beyond Ulster to the British Empire, considering the interaction of evangelicalism and Loyalism beyond Ulster.

Building on the relevant secondary sources, the starting point for Johnston is Aiken McClelland's *William Johnston of Ballykilbeg* which provides comprehensive biographical information but does not offer significant insight into the evangelical

aspect of the character.⁴⁶ Alvin Jackson's condensed biography in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, drawing on both McClelland's material and his own survey of early Unionism, *The Ulster Party: Irish Unionists in the House of Commons, 1884-1911*, Frank Wright, in *Two Lands on One Soil: Ulster Politics before Home Rule*, and Sean Farrell's *Riots and rituals: Sectarian Violence and Political Culture in Ulster, 1784-1886* emphasise his political contribution.⁴⁷ John Wolfe's *Protestant Crusade in Great Britain, 1829-1860* and Alvin Jackson's *Ireland 1798-1998: Politics and War* provide insight into the development of a new evangelical anti-Catholicism and the inter-play between the Orange Order and Toryism earlier in the century.⁴⁸ Hempton and Hill and S. P. Kerr provide background on voluntaryism in Belfast and information on characters which had a formative influence on his religio-political outlook.⁴⁹ These studies provide a context for the study of the religious convictions of the individual. Janice Holmes and Catherine Hirst provide insight into anti-Catholicism and evangelicalism during the 1857 riots and in the 1859 revival.⁵⁰ Both tend to tease apart religion and politics in an effort to establish which had most relevance to the developing situations. Mark Doyle, in his study of the nineteenth century violence in Belfast and Glasgow, examines the relationship between evangelicalism and anti-Catholicism.⁵¹ He splits evangelicalism into moral and political categories also unravelling the strands while acknowledging some overlap. To further examine this complex issue, this study concentrates on the interface between religion and

⁴⁶ A. McClelland, *William Johnston of Ballykilbeg* (Lurgan: Ulster Society, 1990), p.5.

⁴⁷ Farrell, *Riots and Rituals*, p.155; A. Jackson, 'Johnston, William (1829-1902)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004).

⁴⁸ Wolfe, *Protestant Crusade*, pp.105-6; A. Jackson, *Ireland 1798-1998: Politics and War* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), p.63.

⁴⁹ Hempton and Hill, *Evangelical Protestantism in Ulster*, pp.105-128; S. P. Kerr, 'Voluntaryism within the Established Church in Nineteenth Century Belfast', *Studies in Church History*, 23 (1986), pp.347-62.

⁵⁰ Janice Holmes, *Religious Revivals in Britain and Ireland* (Irish Academic Press, 2000), p.31; Janice Holmes, 'The Role of Open-Air Preaching in the Belfast Riots of 1857', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, 102C, no. 3 (2002), pp.51-3; Hirst, *Religion, Politics and Violence*, p.189.

⁵¹ M. Doyle, *Fighting like the Devil for the Sake of God: Protestants, Catholics and the origins of violence in Victorian Belfast* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), pp.16-48.

politics, setting Johnston in an evangelical rather than mainly political context in an attempt to establish whether his politics were in fact an extension of his religious beliefs. Recent studies of Orangeism in the Empire such as those of David Fitzpatrick, D. M. MacRaild and the studies in *The Orange Order in Canada* edited by D. A. Wilson and W. Kelly are viewed alongside articles on anti-Catholicism and evangelical identity in order to establish whether there are common trends and how these might relate to Ulster.⁵²

Chapter Two focuses on the city of Londonderry. The historic myth associated with the city gave it particular status: it was believed to have received divine deliverance from siege as a result of the privations of its Protestant citizens and their stalwart faith. They closed the city gates in the face of the Roman Catholic army of James II and refused to surrender the city till they were relieved by the navy of William III. The commemorations yearly celebrated the closing of the gates on 18 December and the relief of the city on 12 August. The Catholic presence in the city, rising to establish a clear majority by 1851, was becoming increasingly politicised. The concepts of evangelical anti-Catholicism and Protestant unity are considered as part of the dynamic in the city as they developed upon a foundation of settler ideology. These are examined alongside insights derived from studies on the Evangelical Alliance.⁵³

⁵² D. Fitzpatrick, 'Exporting Brotherhood: Orangeism in South Australia', *Immigrants & Minorities*, 23, no.2 (2005); *The Orange Order in Canada*, ed. by D. A. Wilson and W. Kelly, (Dublin: Four Counts Press, 2007); *Evangelicalism: Comparative Studies of Popular Protestantism in North America, the British Isles and Beyond, 1700-1900*, ed. by Noll, Bebbington and Rawlyk; J. Wolffe, 'Unity in Diversity? North Atlantic Evangelical Thought in the Mid Nineteenth Century', (*Studies in Church History*, 32, 1996); J. Wolffe, 'Anti-Catholicism and the British Empire, 1815-1914', ed. by H. M. Carey (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan).

⁵³ J. Wolffe, 'The Evangelical Alliance in the 1840s: An Attempt to Institutionalise Christian Unity' in *Studies in Church History*, (EHS. 23, 1986); I. Randall and D. Hilborn, *One Body in Christ: The History and Significance of the Evangelical Alliance* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2001).

The main study examines the role of evangelicalism in the city with the divisions within evangelicalism being considered in relation to political outlook, interpretations of covenantalism and eschatology. Two particularly relevant articles which contribute to the analysis consider the relationship between the Anglican and Presbyterian communities.⁵⁴ The study itself considers the interplay between the concept of the pan Protestantism of settler ideology and that of evangelical unity and highlights divisions, especially within Presbyterianism, which relate to the core of perceived identity. This chapter highlights the catalytic influence of evangelicalism as it causes unity and division within the Protestant community while maintaining an evangelical ethos.

In Chapter Three, the sermons given at the religious service at the centre of the 12 August and 18 December anniversary commemorations, organised by the Apprentice Boys of Londonderry Association in the period between 1859 and 1886, are set in the wider context of nineteenth-century preaching. Particularly relevant to the latter was the manuscript of the forthcoming book on the history of Victorian sermons edited by Robert Ellison. This expands on his earlier approach to analysing sermons, in *The Victorian Pulpit*, by presenting chapters which take due note of form, style and content of the Victorian sermon.⁵⁵ Particularly pertinent contributions are John Wolffe's on sermons on national events, which highlights the role of Providence in the sermon, that of Thomas Olbricht on biblical criticism and Keith Francis on sermons on evolution and Darwinism and their prevalence, and a twentieth-century chapter by Joseph Evans which touches on

⁵⁴ G. Peatling, 'Whatever happened to Presbyterian Radicalism in the late nineteenth century' in *Politics and Power in Victorian Ireland*, ed. by R. Swift and C. Kinealy (Dublin: Four Courts, 2006); A. Holmes, 'The Uses and Interpretations of Prophecy in Irish Presbyterianism 1850-1930' in *Protestant Millennialism, Evangelicalism and Irish Society, 1790-2005*, ed. by C. Gribben and A. R. Holmes (Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

⁵⁵ R. H. Ellison, *The Victorian Pulpit* (London: Assoc. U.P., 1998).

civil religion.⁵⁶ Also relevant to the Ulster context is Dickson's *Beyond Religious Discourse: Sermons, Preaching and Evangelical Protestantism in Nineteenth Century Irish Society*.⁵⁷ David Cressy's article on the Protestant calendar and T. C. Barnard's on the use of specific dates in Irish Protestant celebrations set the sermons in their religio-political context.⁵⁸ Smart's dimensions of religion are used to identify themes which were prominent in the sermons on these specific occasions and which reflected the emphases that occurred in the interface between the congregation and the preacher in this context.⁵⁹ These are related to the concept of evangelicalism, particularly with regard to David Bebbington's widely-adopted model and with reference to the doctrinal framework of the Evangelical Alliance.⁶⁰

The argument in Chapter Four is that the essence of Protestant cultural identity, which was absorbed into Unionism in the early twentieth century, lies in the fusion of evangelicalism with the values and political agenda of Orangeism. The focus is on the Loyalist organisation of the Apprentice Boys of Londonderry in the same period. This evangelical Protestant organisation underwent a major transformation during this period, in part due to the influence of William Johnston and other lay evangelical influences but also as a result of the regular input of Conservative Protestant clergy. The crucial fusing of elements of evangelical religion and

⁵⁶ J. Wolffe, 'British Sermons on National Events'; T. C. Olbricht, 'The Rhetoric of Henry Ward Beecher and Frederic W. Farrar Regarding Biblical Criticism'; K. Francis, 'Nineteenth-Century British Sermons on Evolution and *The Origin of the Species*: The Dog that Didn't Bark'; J. Evans, 'Sacred Rhetoric and the African-American Civic Sermon' in *A New History of the Sermon: The Nineteenth Century*, ed. by R. H. Ellison (Leiden: Brill, forthcoming, July 2010).

⁵⁷ J. N. I. Dickson, *Beyond Religious Discourse: Sermons, Preaching and Evangelical Protestants in Nineteenth Century Irish Society*, Studies in Evangelical History and Thought (Paternoster, 2007).

⁵⁸ T. C. Barnard, 'The Uses of 23 October 1641 and Irish Protestant Celebrations', *The English Historical Review*, 106, no. 421 (1991); David Cressy, 'The Protestant Calendar and the Vocabulary of Celebration in Early Modern England', *The Journal of British Studies*, 29, no. 1 (1990).

⁵⁹ Smart, *Dimensions of the Sacred*.

⁶⁰ Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, pp.2-19.

Orange ideology is evaluated. The chapter is divided into three sections. The first considers the ideology of Orangeism and its historical involvement with the Apprentice Boy's organisation. The second considers the separate development of this loyalist evangelical organisation and the elements which encouraged unity of purpose and direction within Loyalism. The third looks at clerical input and the link between sermons and speeches while the fourth shows the political development over the period 1859-1886 as Apprentice Boys and the Orange Order began to share the same agenda.

This chapter builds on the arguments in Wright's 'Protestant Ideology and politics in Ulster', Jennifer Todd's 'Two Traditions in Unionist Political Culture' and Mitchel's *Evangelicalism and National Identity in Ulster, 1921-1998* each of which consider the role of Loyalist ideology in Ulster Protestant culture. All three accept a religious element within twentieth-century Loyalism, linked to 'fundamental' evangelicalism, which cannot be described as pure religion, because the ideology is so closely interwoven with a political agenda. This chapter concentrates on the social dimension of the Apprentice Boy's association and emphasises the importance of evangelicalism in its development during the pivotal period between 1860 and 1885. This reflected the synthesis of the ideologies of Orangeism and evangelicalism

Chapter Five delineates the development of ritual against a political chronology and the key issues of revival, disestablishment and home rule. The development of folk Orangeism is contrasted with that of the Orange Order and the pertinent historical studies on the emergence of commemorative practices of J. Hill, J. Kelly

and J. G. Simms are reviewed.⁶¹ In addition the anthropological studies of Dominic Bryan, Anthony Buckley and Neil Jarman, which concentrate on the development of the ritual of parades and marches, are drawn on as the evolution of the rituals of the Apprentice Boy's association are analysed.⁶² The chapter also considers such developments in relation to the relevant scholarly concept of Eric Hobsbawm's and Terence Ranger's 'invention of tradition', a process whereby new rituals were invested with a quasi-traditional lineage though they had in fact emerged in a relatively recent period.⁶³ A second influential concept, Robert Bellah's 'civil religion', which argues the integrity of a civic group encompassing various religious affiliations, was related both to the rituals in Londonderry and to the wider context of Ulster.⁶⁴ Ian McBride's historical study, which illustrated how a powerful myth central to Protestant cultural identity developed from a historic event, was considered in relation to Gerald Parsons' study of civil religion in Siena.⁶⁵ In this latter study, a myth developed in Sienese Roman Catholic culture that was also central to identity and had connotations of divine favour. As with the earlier studies on Orangeism and evangelicalism in the British Empire, this moved the emphasis away from Ulster into a European context in order to help establish the religious impulse in such developments.

Hempton and Hill were confident that evangelicalism contributed to the creation of an Ulster Protestant identity and also to the rise of Unionism, however the actual

⁶¹ J. Hill, 'National Festivals, the State and 'Protestant Ascendancy' in Ireland, 1790-1829', *Irish Historical Studies*, 24, 93, 1994; J. Kelly, 'The Glorious Immortal Memory: Commemoration and Protestant Identity in Ireland, 1660-1800', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, 94, 1994; J. G. Simms, 'Remembering 1690', *Studies*, Autumn 1974.

⁶² D. Bryan, *Orange Parades: The Politics of Ritual, Tradition and Control* (London: Pluto Press, 2000); A. Buckley, 'The Chosen Few: Biblical Texts in the Regalia of an Ulster Secret Society', *Folk Life* (29, 1985); N. Jarman, *Material Conflicts: Parades and Visual Displays in Northern Ireland* (Berg, 1997).

⁶³ E. J. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: C.U.P., 1983).

⁶⁴ R. Bellah, 'Civil Religion in America', *Daedalus*, no. 96 (1967).

⁶⁵ I. McBride, *The Siege of Derry in Ulster Protestant Mythology* (Dublin: Four Courts, 1997); G. Parsons, *Siena, Civil Religion and the Sienese* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004).

role of religion was difficult to pinpoint as it interacted in a complex way with other aspects of identity including politics and nationalism.⁶⁶ This thesis suggests that a more militant evangelical religion had become established in Ulster by the 1850s, expressed in Protestant associations including the Orange Order, and had consolidated its position in the Apprentice Boys organisation during the 1860s. This element impacted on both identity formation and the expression of that identity during the period 1859-1885. The thesis also examines the role of religion both as a catalyst for change and as an element that itself undergoes transformation. Thereafter, in its transformed state, evangelical religion can again act as a catalyst for more fundamental change.

⁶⁶ Hempton and Hill, *Evangelical Protestantism in Ulster*, p.xii.

CHAPTER ONE

William Johnston and His Milieu

The cultural identity of Protestant Ulster in the second half of the nineteenth-century owes much to the influence of William Johnston (1829-1902) and his fellow exponents of religio-politicism. (This term is used to describe politics which are derived from religious convictions rather than those defined by the demands of political party interest and manoeuvrings.) That this identity was shot through with evangelicalism was a reflection of the religious history of the province, the political pressures of the period and the convictions of those involved. The interaction between Orangeism and evangelicalism was reflected in their worldview; the drive for activism and Protestant unity, common to both concepts, playing a vital part in their manner of propagating Protestantism.

In this chapter, I intend to analyse the worldview of William Johnston, taking into consideration the influence of key figures in his life, in order to gain insight into his perception of the role of the Orange Order. There was a division perceived within Orangeism generally, between those who regarded themselves as evangelical Protestant Orangemen and nominal Protestant, political Orangemen.¹ This meant for the latter that political pragmatism could be allowed to overrule religious ethics in order to gain or maintain power for the Tory party; for the former religious ethics were the driving force and Roman Catholic demands, in particular, were to be unconditionally resisted. There was also a popular element more influenced by settler ideology than either party politics or religion. Resistance to Roman Catholic political gain on both religious and political fronts, however, was Johnston's priority

¹ *Protestant Standard (Liverpool)*, 6 Jul. 1889.

and his conservative views were shared by an important faction within both evangelicalism generally and Orangeism. Although very much an individual, Johnston typified a certain mindset that embraced both religion and politics, regarding them as inextricably interlinked and this outlook became widespread within Loyalism generally. Johnston was a member of the Orange Order, the Black Preceptory and the Apprentice Boys of Londonderry, all loyalist organisations through which he disseminated these beliefs. It is proposed that the evangelical worldview that supported these convictions impacted on Ulster Protestant cultural identity. It is further proposed that Johnston's role in the development of commemoration, concentrating on his activities in Londonderry, drew on both concepts of Orangeism and evangelicalism and as a result a hybrid strain of evangelicalism, adapted to the province of Ulster and extended to the British Empire, developed.

Overview

Born in Downpatrick, County Down, in 1829, Johnston was educated at Trinity College Dublin. He studied law, graduating in 1852, though he was not called to the bar until 1872 and does not seem to have practised the profession. In 1853, he inherited Ballykilbeg, a small encumbered estate three miles south east of Downpatrick, from his father and lived the life of a country gentleman without the income to support the role adequately. He married three times, the first in 1853 to Harriet Allen, daughter of a Co. Kilkenny mill-owner, with whom he had two sons and two daughters; the second in 1861 to Arminella Frances Drew (the daughter of his friend Rev. Thomas Drew) who died in childbirth in 1862. Drew was a

leading figure in Belfast evangelicalism.² His third wife was Georgiana Barbara, the younger daughter of Sir John Hay. They married in 1863 and had three sons and four daughters.³

He is most recognised for his success as an Orange politician and polemicist. He became a member of the Orange Order in 1848, was elected deputy grand master of the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland in 1855 and was master of the local Ballydonnell Lodge between 1857 and his death in 1902. The lodge often met in Ballykilbeg House.⁴ He was proprietor of a newspaper, the *Downshire Protestant*, between July 1855 and September 1862, and published a range of *Ballykilbeg Protestant Tracts* throughout the 1850s. His novels included *Narmo and Aimata*, a tale of the Jesuits in Tahiti (1855), *Nightshade* (1857), and *Under Which King* (1872) which reflected his religio-political worldview.⁵

He was a member of the Established Church with Low Church principles and strong anti-Catholic convictions. While attending Trinity, he frequented meetings of evangelical societies and became a member of Trinity College Missionary Society in 1851. The 'Papal Aggression' of 1850 (the creation of the Roman Catholic episcopal hierarchy in England) encouraged him to seek election to the Dublin Protestant Association in 1850. On his return home, he joined the Belfast Protestant Association and was instrumental in forming branches in Newry, Dungannon and Armagh. Moreover, he established the Down Protestant Association in 1854.⁶

² See page 41.

³ A. Jackson, 'William Johnston' (2004).

⁴ A. McClelland, *William Johnston of Ballykilbeg* (Lurgan: Ulster Society, 1990), p.8.

⁵ A. Jackson, 'William Johnston' (2008).

⁶ McClelland, *William Johnston*, p.11.

Johnston was most celebrated for his role in the removal of the Party Processions Act (1850) from the statute books in 1872. This Act was aimed at preventing provocative marches and displays, but Orangemen perceived it to be an infringement of their civil liberties. They also perceived it to have been unfairly administered, since they believed it to be more rigorously imposed in the north than elsewhere in Ireland. On 12 July 1867, Johnston led an Orange procession of some 9000 men from Newtownards to Bangor in County Down. For this breach of the Act, he was imprisoned for two months in 1868 in Downpatrick gaol. The newly enfranchised artisans of Belfast responded to this gesture and gave Johnston their support. He was keen to enter politics, having made an unsuccessful attempt in 1857. In November 1868, Johnston stood as an Independent Conservative, without party approval, and was elected as MP for South Belfast. Thereafter, he was instrumental in winning the repeal of the Act in 1872.⁷ Sean Farrell regards this campaign, which regained the right of Orangemen to march in procession, as vital to the system of cross-class Protestant collaboration which would later prove essential to Unionism.⁸

Financing his role as MP was always a struggle, and in 1878 Johnston accepted a minor government appointment as Inspector of Fisheries. He lost this appointment in 1885 after making a series of religio-political speeches in which he advised clergy at the meeting of the Church of Ireland Synod that since the Twelfth fell on a Sunday that year, they should mention the anniversaries in their sermons. Such advice contravened his terms of employment as a government official. Keen to re-enter the political world, in view of the intensifying pressure for home rule, he was allocated South Belfast to contest as a Conservative candidate and in November

⁷ Ibid, pp.48-73.

⁸ S. Farrell, *Riots and Rituals*, pp.155-6.

1885 was returned at the head of the poll. He retained the seat until his death in 1902.⁹

In this later stage of his parliamentary career, Johnston followed the party line more rigidly. The Conservative Party paid his expenses in 1885 and 1886 and thereafter he accepted a salary from them. He helped bring the newly enfranchised classes into a Conservative Unionist alliance in 1885-6 and was instrumental in the creation of a separate Irish Unionist parliamentary party in January 1886.¹⁰

He retained his popularity within Orangeism, taking a great interest in extending Protestantism within the Empire. To that end he journeyed to Canada on three occasions (1872, 1879, 1891) and to the United States of America in 1900, as a loyalist emissary.¹¹ He was so impressed with Canada that he considered relocating there. In effect, financial restraints both encouraged the initial idea and prevented its fulfilment, better financed opportunities not being available to him at that period.¹²

Central to the man was his religious conviction. In religious observance, Johnston was a Low Church evangelical, his Anglicanism resolutely Scripture based. He was, however, particularly supportive of Protestant unity and within the Orange Order was responsible for the earliest examples of Orange services in dissenting churches.¹³ This desire for denominational co-operation was not confined to the Order; it was a facet of his religious and social life, manifesting itself in his

⁹ Jackson, 'William Johnston'.

¹⁰ *ibid.*

¹¹ McClelland, *William Johnston*, p.105.

¹² *Ibid.*, p.74.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp.106-7.

presiding over such voluntary organisations as the Primitive Wesleyan Missionary Society, addressing the Presbyterian Band of Hope and attending sermons in Presbyterian churches.¹⁴

The social indicators of evangelicalism were clearly present. He was a great supporter of the temperance movement, totally abstaining from 1880, although this more extreme measure of total abstention was not the norm among his evangelical peers. For the last twenty years of his life he attended temperance meetings at home and in Great Britain, was a member of the Council of Ireland Temperance Society and applied his missionary zeal towards introducing temperance lodges in the Orange Order. He attended the meetings of the Sunday Closing Select Committee of the House of Commons from March 1888.¹⁵ He was a committee member of the Ulster Deaf, Dumb and Blind Association, a governor of the Infirmary and Hospital Board, and on the Board of the Lunatic Asylum.¹⁶ He also was involved in the Protestant Orphan Society, the Orange Order's own charity.¹⁷ Over the years he retained his commitment to missionary work attending the Christian Convention for Evangelising the World in 1886.¹⁸

Church attendance, parliamentary duties, meetings for charitable works, temperance, and missionary enterprise abounded in his diary and jostled with meetings of the Orange Lodge, the Black Preceptory and the anniversaries of the Apprentice Boys of Derry. These were the threads from which his life was woven,

¹⁴ Diaries, 8 Jan. 1875, 4 Oct. 1888, 21 Feb. 1869, 21 Mar. 1886.

¹⁵ Ibid, 19 Apr. 1888.

¹⁶ Ibid, 15, 18, 25 Aug. 1866, 4 Sept. 1868.

¹⁷ *DP*, 23 Oct. 1857.

¹⁸ Ibid; Diary, 14 Oct. 1886.

depicting a complex tapestry of evangelical conviction and Orange values and principles that defined the militant evangelical.¹⁹

Johnston's Evangelical Worldview

Although his parents were minor gentry, their worldview accords with that of the more wealthy families in County Down in the early nineteenth century, like the Boyds, Nevins and Keowns, all well-known landed families in the Ards and Lecale areas. Johnston's mother was connected to these through her father Thomas Scott, an army surgeon. These families followed the lead of Robert Jocelyn, third Earl of Roden (1788-1870), in his enthusiasm for active Protestantism. This was exemplified by the proponents of the 'Second Reformation' in Ireland in their sustained effort to convert the population of Ireland to Protestantism. His father supported, though did not belong to, the Orange Order, inviting local representatives to dinner on 12 July and 4 November each year. Roden was also a supporter of Orangeism, holding the Orange gathering on 12 July 1849 on his estate at Tollymore, County Down. This led to a sectarian clash at Dolly's Brae and prompted the imposition of the Party Processions Act of 1850 that banned parades of a political nature and formed the focal point for Johnston's later political career.²⁰

Johnston adopted his parents' evangelical values which were expressed in a desire to improve the lot of their fellow men, opposition to ritualistic practices in the Established Church and opposition to Roman Catholicism. His father, John Brett Johnston, was a member of religious and philanthropic organisations and his

¹⁹ See page 55.

²⁰ McClelland, *William Johnston*, pp.4-5, 107.

example probably led to Johnston's initial efforts to improve the lot of his father's tenants. This he attempted to do by setting up a lending library in Ballykilbeg House, encouraging Saturday afternoon visits to borrow from the many thousands of moral tales which he had purchased.²¹ His mother's influence was seen in the encouragement of his early literary efforts – as a boy he owned a printing press and in 1845 he published the *Ballykilbeg Newspaper* (weekly) which ran for fifteen issues and thereafter the *Ballykilbeg Monthly News* which ran for five between July and November 1845.²²

Johnston's career was shaped by a combination of factors, namely his commitment to evangelicalism, Conservatism, Orangeism, and his desire for Protestant unity. For him, these concepts were inter-related not only as a result of his upbringing but as a reflection of a particular combination of influences that had developed into a motivating force in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. There had been a relationship between Orangeism and Toryism in the early nineteenth century as a result of common opposition to concessions to Roman Catholics. However, the Order's reputation for aggression made it generally less appealing to the 'respectable' classes. In the 1820s, membership came from all levels of society, including Irish landowners and it achieved royal patronage, but it was still held to be an implicit threat to political stability. In the early 1830s, these difficulties were being resolved drawing on adverse reaction to Emancipation and reform. This resulted in greater gentry support for the Order and consequently a more complete relationship with Toryism. This, however, came to an end with accusations of involvement in the alleged Fairman plot in 1835 which sought to

²¹ *Ibid*, p.5.

²² *Ibid*, p.12.

place the Duke of Cumberland rather than Victoria on the throne.²³ The formal dissolution of the Order in 1836 meant direction from the Grand Lodge of Ireland disappeared but, to an extent, many local lodges continued in a low key manner more as social organisations but keeping values alive.

It has been suggested that Orangeism also continued to have a partial existence in Protestant associations such as the Dublin Protestant Operative movement. This movement was characterised by strong evangelical and apocalyptic Protestantism and had leaders like the Rev. Tresham Gregg, an Orangeman.²⁴ However, Wolfe argues convincingly that the picture was more complex. He states that the political anti-Catholicism of the 1830s was less a continuation of the anti-Emancipationism of the 1820s, associated with Orangeism, but rather a new movement which was stimulated by evangelicalism and by the circumstances in Ireland following Emancipation.²⁵ As a result, religious issues were taking centre stage again in political life and evangelicals could now work within the existing structures available to them even if they might strive for a higher level of religious integrity than the political world allowed them.²⁶ The re-establishment of the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland in 1845-6 restored the links with Toryism to the extent that, it has been suggested, the Central Conservative Society of Ireland (1853) was an Orange initiative.²⁷

The prospect of political Protestant unity also developed in the 1830s. There was a growing relationship between 'a small but significant section of Irish

²³ J. Wolfe, *The Protestant Crusade*, pp.93-94; Hereward Senior, *Orangeism in Ireland and Britain 1795-1835* (London: Routledge, 1966), pp.254-273.

²⁴ A. Jackson, *Ireland 1798-1998*, p.63.

²⁵ Wolfe, *Protestant Crusade*, p.105.

²⁶ *Ibid*, p.106.

²⁷ Jackson, *Ireland 1798-1998*, p.63; K. T. Hoppen, *Elections, Politics and Society in Ireland, 1832-1885* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), p.323.

Presbyterians' and the developing Conservative movement during the 1830s.²⁸ This was unusual as Presbyterians had traditionally been associated with political dissent and had maintained a distance from Orangeism. They were aligning themselves with Conservatism at the same time as Orangemen were becoming proponents of this political party. This emerging political union was innovative and underlines the development of Protestant political consciousness at this time. It also provided a parallel, and countermeasure for Catholic politicization and organisation, although on a smaller scale.²⁹ One of the major influences through which this political alignment was achieved was Rev. Henry Cooke (1788-1868). Cooke had been alarmed by Catholic consolidation after Emancipation and sought to counter it by a Protestant alliance. He perceived the Church Temporalities Act (1833), though aimed at the Established Church, to be an attack on all Protestantism. At the mass meeting at Hillsborough, called by Lord Roden, to achieve co-operation within Protestantism, Cooke called for Protestant unity and for 'a sacred marriage of Christian forbearance where they differ, of Christian love where they agree, and of Christian co-operation in all matters where their common safety is concerned'.³⁰ Though Cooke's convictions were formed by his Protestant principles rather than party affinity, he was involved in the machinery of politics. As such, Cooke made Conservatism respectable to Presbyterians. Generally though, the majority, at this point, did not become political converts, remaining aligned to Liberalism. However, he did pave the way for the later Unionism of the 1880s.³¹

²⁸ Jackson, *Ireland 1798-1998*, p.63.

²⁹ Ibid, pp.63-4.

³⁰ R. F. Holmes, *Henry Cooke* (Belfast: Christian Journals Ltd., 1981), p.115.

³¹ Jackson, *Ireland 1798-1998*, p.64.

Evangelical Influences

Cooke's influence played a significant role in Johnston's early development.

Cooke was not an Orangeman but he was revered by them because he supported Protestant unity and Conservative politics. Johnston and Cooke did not always agree, however, as denominational differences inevitably rose above commonality of purpose on occasion. They were not in accord, for example, on the Maynooth issue. Cooke was reluctantly supportive of the government on the Maynooth issue in 1845.³² Johnston wrote an editorial in support of the repeal of the grant when the issue reappeared in the vigorous anti-Maynooth campaign of 1855-56.³³ Also, Johnston tended to take a harder line where the machinery of Roman Catholicism was concerned. At the General Assembly, on 10 July 1856, Cooke made the statement 'I will not say that the priests of Rome are not the priests of Christ. I will not on any account say that they have not a commission ... I will not join in the sweeping assertion that the Church of Rome is not the Church of Christ.'³⁴

Johnston had to advertise his disapproval in print. For Johnston, the Pope was the Anti-Christ. He stated:

We believe we are fulfilling a solemn duty in condemning in the strongest terms the dangerous and heretical teaching that the Church of Rome is the Church of Christ or any part or portion of the same.³⁵

In Johnston's opinion, Cooke was putting a weapon into the hands of the Papacy. The difference in attitude between Johnston and Cooke on this occasion was not merely a result of denominational differences, as other Presbyterian ministers within the Conservative fold held the same ideas as Johnston rather than Cooke.³⁶ Johnston explained his attitude when he praised Cooke's initial support of open air

³² Wolfe, *Protestant Crusade*, p.204.

³³ *DP*, 30 Nov. 1855.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 25 July 1856.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

preaching in 1857. He stated that while a debt of gratitude was owed to Cooke for his stand against evil, he had sometimes regretted Cooke's silence on some Protestant issues which he felt merited his eloquence.³⁷

Cooke was of Thomas Drew's generation and they were friends.³⁸ Johnston's diary records a meeting between the two in which Cooke said he was 'in favour of processions as keeping up the spirits'.³⁹ His July diary records his own attendance at the funeral of Cooke's wife.⁴⁰ In December 1868, he supported a public funeral for Cooke, seconding the motion of the Bishop of Down and Connor. He acted as one of the pall bearers.⁴¹ He later gave the inaugural address (1876) at a special Orange demonstration on Cooke's birthday to honour his life, held in front of Cooke's statue. Johnston's speech highlighted the issues that he thought most laudable and which he shared with Cooke. His introduction made reference to Cooke's sound pedigree, in particular his puritan ancestors, one of whom had fought at the siege of Londonderry, an always desirable link in Ulster. Paramount was the importance of the Bible in his life, especially with regard to its use in education. He emphasised that Cooke had had Luther's spirit as he championed truth in Ulster, battling for 'Christ's crown and covenant'. He quoted Cooke's own words, spoken in justification of why he, a Presbyterian, should make common cause with Anglican Conservatives:

I am conservative of everything that is worth conserving. I am conservative of the rights of property. I am conservative of abstract and general Protestantism, whatever may be the form of the Church in which it is contained.... Finally, I am conservative of the Bible.⁴²

³⁷ Ibid, 11 Sept. 1857.

³⁸ BNL, obituary, 24 Oct. 1870.

³⁹ Diary, 10 Feb. 1868.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 4 July 1868.

⁴¹ Ibid, 16, 18 Dec. 1868; J. L. Porter, *The Life and Times of Henry Cooke* (Belfast: Ambassador, 1999), p.502.

⁴² *Inaugural Address*, 11 May 1876, PRONI, D880/7/2.

He lauded Cooke's vision that a political party was necessary that would conserve the Constitution with its maintenance of liberty and law. Vital also was his perception of the necessity of Protestant union. He quoted Hugh McNeile, restating that like Luther, Calvin and Cranmer, Cooke was a hero for his day. Men of Ulster, he added, would not forget the heroes of any era. Cooke's image appeared in 1888 on banners in Orange commemoration in company with those of Drew and Johnston himself.⁴³ Cooke's opposition to O'Connell's desire to 'dismember' the Empire was a further point in his favour.⁴⁴ Cooke tended to bridge the gap between politically-aware evangelicalism and the militant evangelicalism of Rev. Thomas Drew.

Drew was a close friend and a significant influence in Johnston's life within Anglicanism, perhaps even to the extent of being his mentor. Drew was a friend of Johnston's father⁴⁵ and had a high profile in Belfast Protestantism as a result of his ultra Protestant views, his membership of the Orange Institution and his determination to bring the Gospel to as many Roman Catholics as he could reach through his missionary endeavours. Drew was, for twenty-six years, perpetual curate of Christ Church, Belfast. Christ Church was built as part of the Church of Ireland's Church Extension Programme to provide 1000 free seats for the working classes, in the interface between the Catholic neighbourhood of the Pound and the Protestant neighbourhood of Sandy Row.⁴⁶ He was the motivating force behind much of the Church of Ireland's voluntaryism. He was a founder member of the Church Accommodation and Clergy Aid Societies, and heavily involved in the Belfast Parochial Mission and the Church Education Society supported by his

⁴³ BNL, 13 Jul 1888; Jarman, *Material Conflicts*, p.68.

⁴⁴ *Inaugural Address*, 11 May 1876, PRONI, D880/7/2.

⁴⁵ DR, 25 May 1844.

⁴⁶ D. Hempton and M. Hill, *Evangelical Protestantism in Ulster*, p.111.

colleagues Rev. Charles Seaver, Rev. William McIlwaine and Rev. Theophilus Campbell.⁴⁷

Drew regarded the Church of Ireland as a missionary church and believed it to be his role to reach out to the unchurched in his community, both Protestant and Roman Catholic. Johnston shared Drew's conviction about the role of conversionism within the Church of Ireland. He felt it imperative that it should fulfil its missionary role in Ireland among the Roman Catholics, not leaving everything to organisations such as the Irish Society. In 1885, Johnston seconded a motion at the General Synod. He said:

It (the synod) should constantly set before its people those distinctive doctrines and tenets by which it justified its very existence as a Church in the land to which they belonged. If they were not here as a Protestant church protesting against errors of the Church of Rome, they had no right to be there at all. The moment their church ceased to protest and establish that it is a church of the Apostles and not a church of the apostate, (was) the moment it ceased to discharge those functions which it ought to discharge as the Church of Ireland.⁴⁸

Drew was 'intensely evangelical, energetic, innovative and often controversial, and his efforts made his church into a centre for religious fellowship and material aid'.⁴⁹ Particularly active in moral reform, he attacked traditional pastimes like theatre, boxing and the cockpit. He understood the importance of popular customs to the working classes so he made religious festivals a more attractive alternative by transforming them into community occasions, with flags, singing and parading.⁵⁰ He believed in educating his flock in his religio-political creed and invited controversial preachers, such as the Rev. Mortimer O'Sullivan, a convert with anti-Catholic views, to address them. Drew also called on the Protestants of Ulster to

⁴⁷ S. P. Kerr, 'Voluntaryism', p.349.

⁴⁸ *Daily Express*, 22 Apr. 1885.

⁴⁹ Hempton and Hill, *Evangelical Protestantism in Ulster*, p.111.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, pp.116, 119, 123.

unite against the growing authority of the Roman Catholic Church.⁵¹ It was this aspect of Ulster evangelicalism – its anti-Catholicism - which gained a 'real foothold' in working-class culture.⁵² Drew also took the lead in setting up the Christ Church Protestant Association (1854) with its aspiration to regain all the ground lost through Catholic Emancipation, supporting the repeal of the act, the withdrawal of the Maynooth grant, the abolition of nunneries and the dissolution of the National Education board.⁵³ These aims were shared by Johnston's Down Protestant Association.

Mark Doyle regards Drew's evangelicalism as a political construct rather than a moral one. He regards it as less purely religious than the 'elite' moral reformers, such as the Unitarian minister Andrew McIntyre, who concentrated on conversionism.⁵⁴ But Drew's political motivation cannot be separated from his religious convictions. Doyle makes a valid point in stating that this 'political evangelicalism' resonated with the working classes and evangelicalism fitted easily within the settler ideology of the Ulster Protestant infusing it with missionary zeal.⁵⁵ Moreover, his suggestion that Drew used the Orange Order to educate the working classes in anti-Catholic beliefs has a sound basis. Drew believed that this reinforcement of anti-Catholicism was necessary because insufficient action was being taken against Rome and 'latent piety and vigour were being directed into wrong channels or exhausted in mere evangelical sentimentality'.⁵⁶ In the Orange lodges, evangelicalism interacted with popular Protestantism, mutually reinforcing

⁵¹ Ibid, p.123

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ M. Doyle, *Fighting like the Devil*, p.17.

⁵⁵ Ibid, p.19.

⁵⁶ *Report of Commissioners of Inquiry into the origin and character of the riots in Belfast, in July and September, 1857*, House of Commons papers, 1857, vol. 26, Drew's sermon, Appendix 1.

the anti-Catholic strands and this produced a more combative strain of evangelicalism.

Doyle states that evangelicalism manifested itself in Orangeism as an ethical system more acceptable to members than the moralising of reformers, suggesting that the religious element was thus removed.⁵⁷ He also states that there was little evidence of Orangemen being involved in the 'religious' elements of evangelicalism standing aloof from proselytising agencies.⁵⁸ However, it can be argued that, for a significant number, ethics formed a religious dimension deriving from spirituality, and political views developed from religious convictions. It can be claimed that Drew was using the Orange Order as a vehicle for evangelical activism and social improvement as well as a means of Protestant defence. This was a valid part of the evangelical culture during the mid to late nineteenth century. Drew spoke of the Scriptural quality and magnificence of Orange principles and how they led Orangemen to live good, sober, united and consistent lives. By such a confederation, he stated, all society could be influenced and swayed. The principles of Protestantism and truth could then stand, in his view, against the perceived machinations of Jesuitism.⁵⁹

Drew's version of uncompromising evangelical Protestantism, which regarded Roman Catholicism as anti-Christian, was shared by Johnston. This is not to say that they were always in agreement. For example, they held opposing views on the Black Preceptory's attachment to the Orange Order.⁶⁰ Johnston wrote to Drew, visited him socially, went to hear him lecture and preach and supported him

⁵⁷ Doyle, *Fighting like the Devil*, p.30.

⁵⁸ Ibid, p.29.

⁵⁹ *Inquiry, Belfast*, Drew's sermon, Appendix 1.

⁶⁰ McClelland, *William Johnston*, p.22.

in his newspaper articles when he was attacked in print by other papers.⁶¹ Both were involved in Orangeism and felt the same about the necessity of commemoration, giving their support to the Apprentice Boys of Derry in December 1860 by travelling together to Derry to show their solidarity. They also believed in the fellowship of evangelical churches and a Protestant unity that transcended denominational boundaries, the importance of evangelism, the propagation of Protestantism and the sacred role of commemoration therein. Drew's view of the importance of martyr commemoration in evangelical Protestantism was expressed when he spoke at a meeting arranged by the Down Protestant Association at Johnston's instigation.⁶² He stressed in his sermons the importance within Protestantism of giving God due thanks for past deliverances and freedoms. He did this by praising the fidelity of the Protestant martyrs, especially Ridley and Latimer, who were to be regarded as exemplars, particularly for the younger generation who might be called upon to stand up for their religion. He believed it necessary to follow the example of the tribes of the Old Testament in publicly giving thanks and was aware of the importance of such popular culture to the masses. However, he recognised a need for order and discipline and had an understanding of the disastrous consequences of 'allowing liberty to fall into undue licence'.⁶³ Strong leadership and guidance was necessary and this was a principle endorsed in practice by Johnston who led by such example.

Drew was very much a leader of hard-line Protestant opinion in the late fifties and there were many occasions when Johnston gave Drew his full support in controversial circumstances. As an ultra Protestant in mid-nineteenth century Ulster, Drew came under fire from both the Liberal and Conservative press, albeit

⁶¹ Diary, 1868; *DP*, 4 Jan. 1861, 23 Sept. 1859, 17 Jul. 1857, 17 Oct. 1856.

⁶² *DP*, 19 Oct. 1855.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

for different reasons. The Liberal press deplored his perceived lack of tolerance. Moreover, the *Banner of Ulster* criticised Drew's religio-politics by stating that 'The mixture of religion and politics is heterogeneous in itself and of such a nature as to corrupt both'.⁶⁴ The Conservative press criticised because he put Protestant principles before party politics. Both disapproved of his carrying his Protestantism into everyday practice and into national policy, suggesting that the world had moved on but he had not. Johnston's fierce defence of Drew shows how committed he was to his father-in-law's worldview.⁶⁵

A further early influence was the Anglican missionary Edward Nangle (1799-1883). Johnston had a particular admiration for Nangle's success as a missionary on Achill Island. Drew and Nangle had both attended Trinity College, Dublin, in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, a period when it had a particular reputation for blending a fierce anti-Catholicism with prophecy – the Roman Church being the beast of *Revelation* 13. 'Since the majority of the Fellows were in clerical orders, their influence over future generations of Irish clergymen paved the way for the growth of evangelicalism within the established church'.⁶⁶ Johnston, who attended somewhat later, would have had the full benefit of this developing climate. Johnston visited the mission on Achill Island in the summer of 1852 and made enough of an impression to be invited to become Nangle's curate and to edit the *Herald*, Nangle's newspaper. An offer, however, that he did not accept.⁶⁷ Their writing would have had much in common, however, since both wrote religio-

⁶⁴ Ibid, 17 Oct. 1856.

⁶⁵ Ibid.,

⁶⁶ Kelley, T. J. 'Come Lord Jesus, quickly come!'. The writing and Thought of Edward Nangle, 1828-1862', in *Protestant Millennialism, Evangelicalism and Irish Society, 1790-2005*, ed. by C. Gribben and A. R. Holmes, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), p.106.

⁶⁷ Diary, 16 Jun. – 1 Jul. 1852.

political pamphlets for the Protestant Association.⁶⁸ Johnston was also on good terms with Tresham Gregg and Alexander Dallas, both of whom were Anglican clergy who were involved in proselytising efforts and known for their anti-Catholic rhetoric.⁶⁹

These clerics and Johnston shared a pre-millennial outlook. This view was pessimistic about the immediate prospects of humanity, anticipating the 'end time' when the Second Coming would follow a period of human degeneration. Johnston endorsed the interpretation of biblical prophecy of Revelation that referred to the Pope as the Anti-Christ⁷⁰ and his early Protestant Tracts make this evident. He said:

Popery is not Christianity, but is its counterfeit, a devil made forgery of the image of God; that the representative of the Papacy is called by God the 'Man of Sin', which day by day the Spirit of God will consume, while it shall be thoroughly blasted, for ever, at the coming of the Lord.⁷¹

An example of degeneration was perceived to be the Maynooth grant.⁷² The grant had been initially made in 1795 and was continued on an annual basis by the united Parliament after 1800. Peel had trebled it and made it permanent in 1845 with an added payment for building works. Johnston's opinion was

England is falling through her support of Popery; let us (evangelical Protestants), with God's help save her. ... Let us be up and doing, and never cease our labours till the Maynooth grant is wiped from the statute books.⁷³

⁶⁸ G. A. Cahill, 'The Protestant Association and the Anti-Maynooth Agitation of 1845', *The Catholic Historical Review*, 43, no. 3, (1957), p.301 for ref. to Nangle; See pp.52-3 of this chapter for reference to Johnston and the Protestant Associations.

⁶⁹ McClelland, *William Johnston*, p.107.

⁷⁰ *DP*, 25 Jul. 1856.

⁷¹ Ballykilbeg Protestant Tracts, The Martyrs of 1555, PRONI D/880/7/3.

⁷² *DP*, 30 Nov. 1855.

⁷³ *Ibid*.

Johnston's Protestantism, and that of his circle, was also covenantal. He firmly believed in providentialism, God's direct intervention in human affairs, and his retribution if faith was broken. This was evident from statements made by Johnston as early as 1848. In his view, the famine (1845-51) was the direct result of breaking the covenant in relation to Maynooth. This was not an unusual belief: on 24 March 1847, there was a national day of fast and humiliation in the United Kingdom as people reacted to the famine in Ireland as God's punishment for a nation's sin.⁷⁴ In a petition he had drawn up for consideration by Parliament, on behalf of several Orange Lodges in February 1848, Johnston stated:

that we, your petitioners, view with alarm the proposed introduction of a bill to establish diplomatic relations with Rome.

That we beseech your lordships to recollect the former prosperous state of these realms, to contrast it with the terrible year of famine, and the present total prostration of all the energies of the country – the sequents to passing of the bill for increasing the grant to Maynooth.⁷⁵

Rev. Dr. Drew shared the platform with Rev. Tresham Gregg in 1852 where they both strongly spoke against the Maynooth endowment. Johnston was in the audience giving his support.⁷⁶ He believed strongly that Britain would pay for breaking faith with God by accommodating Roman Catholicism. He wrote in his tract on piety in politics

Why should there not be, as in the days of the Covenant, a great confederating of the people, under a vow to God?

Why should not that be done which was done at the Glorious Revolution when all England entered into a solemn bond to stand by the Protestant cause?⁷⁷

⁷⁴ P. Gray, 'National Humiliation and the Great Hunger: Fast and Famine in 1847', *Irish Historical Studies*, 32, no. 126 (2000), p.193.

⁷⁵ McClelland, *William Johnston*, p.7

⁷⁶ *Report of Great Meeting against Maynooth, 27 Jan. 1852*, D880/7/3.

⁷⁷ *Paper on Piety in Politics, or Practical Protestantism*, 1860, PRONI, D880/7/3.

Here he is linking Calvinistic covenantalism with Anglican conservatism. This could be achieved more comfortably in the Irish context than elsewhere in Britain as Calvinism also had an important place in the history of the Church of Ireland in the province.⁷⁸ Johnston himself was more at ease with the fellowship of Presbyterians than High Churchmen.

Influential figures such as Cooke, Drew, Gregg and Nangle were representative of the religious and political leadership that became integral to the Ulster loyalist tradition. Their rhetoric, and those of like-minded individuals, laced with evangelical conviction, gave a cutting edge to Ulster Protestantism in this period and helped shape the worldview of the younger generation of which Johnston was a prime example.

Evangelical Activism

Central to Johnston's character was the evangelical desire to put his Protestant principles into action. This drive for Christian activism influenced both Evangelical and political aspects of his life as, for him, politics flowed from his religion rather than both concepts constituting separate compartments. The Protestant principles, absorbed in his early years, came to maturity in the various Protestant societies with which he was involved as he strove to achieve his religio-political goals, such as removing the Maynooth grant or the repealing of Emancipation. Protestant associations can be categorised as part of a group of societies and pressure groups that agitated against Roman Catholicism, predominantly the British Society for Promoting the Religious Principles of the Reformation, founded

⁷⁸ W. J. H. McKee, *The Ulster Revival of 1859 and the Development of Presbyterianism in The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland 1840-1990: A celebration of Presbyterian witness during 150 years*, ed. by R. F. G. Holmes and Knox R. B., (Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland, 1990), p.43.

in 1827, the National Club (1845), the Scottish Reformation Society (1850) and the Protestant Alliance (1851); the Protestant Association being founded in 1836.⁷⁹ Though the membership of these organisations did not generally constitute a mass movement, the agendas of some, at least, had a strong following among the loyal orders in Ulster. Of particular relevance is their combination of interests which tended 'to link aspects of anti-Catholicism which scholars have been prone to separate from each other: the articulation of Protestant ideology and theology; the stimulation of 'No Popery' feeling in the country; the evangelization of Roman Catholics' and the marshalling of political pressure'.⁸⁰ The ideal of Protestant unity was a goal that was sought but rarely achieved in Britain generally because of denominational and political differences.

At the inauguration of the Down Protestant Association, held at the Primitive Methodist Preaching House in Downpatrick on 5th August 1854 - suggesting a wider sphere of influence than Anglicanism - William Johnston illustrated this combination of interests.⁸¹ He explained that the purpose of the association would be to hold public meetings and petition parliament, meeting the needs of the times, particularly in view of the perceived recent 'papal aggression' (1850). He added that there were some sixty Protestant associations in Britain to co-ordinate with, and the Protestant Alliance, an organisation under the presidency of Lord Shaftesbury, was a further ally of their cause. The Alliance's object was to 'maintain and defend against all the encroachments of Popery, the scriptural doctrines of the Reformation and the principles of religious liberty, as the historic security under God for the temporal and spiritual welfare and prosperity of this kingdom.' The Alliance, he asserted, existed also in India, Canada, Germany and

⁷⁹ Wolffe, *Protestant Crusade*, p.6.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, p.7.

⁸¹ *DR*, 5 Aug. 1854.

different towns in Great Britain.⁸² He also stressed its success in gaining general evangelical support.⁸³ This striving for Protestant unity, not only in local areas but internationally was a prime object for Johnston. However, from his point of view, the most effective organisation and the one with the greatest potential for religious-political activism was the Orange Institution.

Johnston regarded Orangeism as a vehicle for evangelicalism. He stated that the Orange Institution was a protective society in organisational terms but that it demanded active Protestant propagation. It required its members to 'actively aid and seek' the spread of the Gospel.⁸⁴ Commemoration in itself was a means of propagating religion by keeping memories, examples and duties to the fore to reinforce them, to educate participants and to connect with on-lookers. The symbols of Protestantism displayed in such events were to counter those of Roman Catholicism which were becoming increasingly prominent. Johnston's newspaper, the *Downshire Protestant*, stated

The Orange Institution is not, properly speaking, a missionary society but it requires its members to propagate the Protestant religion, and we can fearlessly point to the most active missionary labourers amongst the Romanists in Ireland, as men carrying out the requirements of the Institution, which opens its lodges with this prayer to the Almighty: 'Let Thy Holy Scriptures have free access and be brought home to the hearts of our Roman Catholic brethren. Teach them, O Lord, to feel and to know the truth as it is in Jesus and to set at nought the traditions of men. Believing and trusting in the name of Christ alone as the only hope of salvation, may their souls be preserved unto eternal life'.⁸⁵

For Johnston, the preservation and protection of Protestantism with its perceived civil and religious liberties, provided a framework which enabled the spread of the

⁸² Ibid; Though not technically inaccurate, this was somewhat exaggerating its influence as it probably had only a token presence in Germany and India.

⁸³ Wolffe, *Protestant Crusade*, p.251.

⁸⁴ *DP*, 23 Oct. 1857.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

Gospel. He believed that the Orange Institution was merely organised Protestantism⁸⁶ and asserted that 'there is need for its existence and there is need for its action'.⁸⁷ His newspaper suggested that Orangemen took St. Paul and his activism in spreading the Word for their example and they asserted that 'faith, showing itself through works, was the Orange principle' and that 'faith without works is dead'.⁸⁸ This combination of principles and values constituted evangelicalism and its presence extended to other loyalist orders which shared a tradition of popular Orangeism.⁸⁹

Historians have tended to treat Orangeism and evangelicalism as quite separate entities, stemming, as they do, from different traditions. However, there is no reason to discount the belief that, at popular level, the apparent quickening that affected religious and para-religious organisations in the early nineteenth-century could have had a similar effect on Orange membership. Moreover, evangelicalism began to operate through religio-political organisations in the early thirties and by the mid fifties such religio-politicalism was well established. The hybridising of Orange and evangelical strands was demonstrated in the mindset of key individuals in the Order who were held in esteem. Thus, it seems more than credible that Johnston and Drew led a significant movement within Orangeism even if their religious convictions were not represented in the totality of the organisation.

Evangelicalism was the driving force for Johnston's activism and this is illustrated by his writings. In the late 1840s and early 1850s, he produced a number of protestant tracts for distribution, upon request, by the various Protestant

⁸⁶ Ibid, 17 Aug. 1855.

⁸⁷ Ibid, 26 Oct. 1855.

⁸⁸ Ibid, 18 Nov. 1859.

⁸⁹ See Chapter 4.

Associations. The content was evidently acceptable to the Conservative newspaper, the *Belfast News-Letter*, which stated that these tracts should be introduced to the Protestant public and were particularly suited for distribution among all classes of Protestants to confirm their religious principles. For Roman Catholics, the alleged purpose would be to lead them to inquire into 'that baneful spiritual tyranny by which they are enslaved and worked like automatons by the hands of their priesthood'.⁹⁰ In a later tract titled '*Martin Luther or No Surrender*', Johnston wrote:

To meet Rome, we must have men of true faith, of earnest prayer, and of dauntless action. Bound together in one great bond of brotherhood, let Protestants take up anew, themselves, the pledges taken by their forefathers long ago. Let there be no mere hereditary Protestants now: let every man be a Protestant, or call himself so no longer. Let the faithful unite, and the traitors depart. Let those who value true religion, and those who love true liberty, cease not, day nor night, their contest with Babylon, till 'Great Babylon comes in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of wine of the fierceness of his wrath.'⁹¹

Zeal for the protection of Protestantism and evangelical zeal for missionary activity often coincided. This was evident in an early tract titled *Missionary Enterprise*.⁹² Here Johnston stated that missionary endeavour was an express command from Christ, prior to His ascension, and should be taken as seriously as the other commandments from God. In pre-millennial mode he stated that precedence should be given to the Jews in order to ensure the Second Coming as to 'begin at Jerusalem' was the precise direction given by God. If this command was not fulfilled the sun would set on England's glory with inevitable repercussions for Ireland.⁹³

⁹⁰ *BNL*, 28 Dec. 1853.

⁹¹ Ballykilbeg Protestant Tracts V, *Martin Luther: or 'No Surrender'* - (Belfast, W & G Agnew, 1854).

⁹² Protestant Tract (manuscript), '*Missionary Enterprise*', 9 Nov. 1845, PRONI D880/7/3.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

His purpose in writing these tracts was to spread Protestantism. He wanted to reinforce Protestantism for those within the fold while alerting Roman Catholics to the perceived error of their ways and opening their minds to the Gospel. This was also the purpose of the novels he wrote in the late 1850s, the most successful of which was *Nightshade*, which ran to many editions. The hero of *Nightshade* returns to Ulster during the agrarian agitation of the late 1840s to find out that the sister of his betrothed is in the power of Jesuits in Paris.⁹⁴ Jesuits at this period were the archetypal villains in anti-Roman Catholic literature but in *Nightshade* this was more than a literary device. Johnston had a great antipathy to them, regarding Jesuitism as a particularly sinister branch of Roman Catholicism.⁹⁵ He was convinced that they had but two objects in view: to divide Protestants before ultimately overthrowing Protestantism, and to maintain the unity of Roman Catholicism.⁹⁶ In the novel, Liberal Protestants and 'Puseyites' were also regarded as suspect. However, among the characters of sterling virtue was a Rev. Mr. Werd, purportedly Thomas Drew.⁹⁷

Continuing what was obviously a favoured vehicle of propaganda, Johnston launched another newspaper, the *Downshire Protestant*, running from 1855 to 1862. It held as its object the desire to:

keep (Protestant) Principle ever in the van, and to point out clearly and forcibly what seems to be the best line of action; to urge to bold assertion of Freedom's rights, and the merit of undaunted bravery; to promote the cause of Protestantism in the Church and in the State, taking a long look ahead, and somewhat of a retrospective glance at certain old immortal memories.....⁹⁸

⁹⁴ William Johnston, *Nightshade* (London, R. Bentley, 1857).

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ *DP*, 7 Sept. 1860.

⁹⁷ Stephen J. Brown, *Ireland in Fiction: A Guide to Irish Novels, Tales, Romances, and Folk-Lore* (Dublin, London: Maunsel and Company Ltd., 1916), p.123.

⁹⁸ *DP*, 4 Jan 1861.

The importance of reading an appropriate newspaper was a favoured topic of Rev. Thomas Drew. It formed the basis of a talk at the opening of the Newry Protestant Reading Room in 1859. He was most anxious that his audience should appreciate the influence that could be brought to bear on a family by newspapers and therefore argued that it was important to choose them carefully.⁹⁹

The *Downshire Protestant* achieved a circulation out of all proportion to its local hinterland, with a stamped circulation of 25,000 per week.¹⁰⁰ It was regarded as an ultra Protestant and Orange organ and its motto quoted Cromwell to link both Johnston and Drew to the Protestantism and anti-Catholicism of an earlier age:

I meddle not with men's consciences, but if by liberty of conscience you mean our paying you to propagate and teach the doctrine of the Papacy, I judge it best to use plain dealing, and to let you know, where the parliament of Great Britain have power, that shall not be done.

Johnston declared that Protestants were not yet willing to foreswear their fathers' faith and that the *Downshire Protestant* would adopt Derry's watchword, 'No Surrender'.¹⁰¹

Militant evangelicalism

Johnston's newspaper coverage of three controversial events in the late fifties provides insight into his view of evangelicalism. The first was Drew's sermon which was considered a contributory element in the outbreak of the Belfast riots of 1857. Drew's parish experienced serious sectarian rioting in 1857. Although this

⁹⁹ Ibid, 23 Sept. 1859.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 14 Dec. 1861.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 4 Jan. 1861.

was not the first time there were such violent confrontations,¹⁰² the catalyst in bringing about the first stage of rioting was generally regarded as the Orange Order's celebration of the Twelfth in Belfast.¹⁰³ As Grand Chaplain of the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland, Drew gave a sermon on Protestantism to 300 Orangemen from various Sandy Row lodges in his parish. The congregation had marched in order of lodge to the church despite the 1850 Act which prohibited such processions. The Orangemen did not wear regalia on the street but donned orange scarves and sashes once inside the building. The return march was uneventful so the parade itself did not cause immediate confrontation. However, in the view of the commissioners of inquiry into the riots, not only was the parade provocative but the sermon was unduly inflammatory.¹⁰⁴ Though, at the time, Roman Catholics may not have been privy to the content, this sermon was subsequently published in the *Downshire Protestant*.¹⁰⁵ Contemporary analysis has suggested that the sermon was not evangelical being more political than religious, the anti-Catholicism strident.¹⁰⁶ However, it can usefully highlight the outlook of militant evangelicals.

That Drew was an evangelical preacher was not in question, but this particular sermon was not regarded as being evangelical in intent, lacking the requisite qualities. Dickson, for example, finds it did not meet his definition which was partially based on Bebbington's model. For Dickson, four 'guiding questions' had to be addressed in analysis— whether the sermon upheld the centrality of the Bible in public preaching, whether preaching on the sacrifice of Christ was a central issue, whether the language used reflected a conversionist intent, whether it

¹⁰² I. Budge, O'Leary, C., *Belfast: Approach to Crisis. A Study of Belfast Politics 1613-1970* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1973), pp.75-77, J. Brewer and G. Higgins, *Anti-Catholicism*, p.66.

¹⁰³ Janice Holmes, 'The Role of Open-Air Preaching', p.50.

¹⁰⁴ *Inquiry, Belfast*, p.11.

¹⁰⁵ *DP*, 17 Jul. 1857.

¹⁰⁶ J. N. I. Dickson, *Beyond Religious Discourse*, pp.179-80.

contained the impetus actively to disseminate evangelical ideas in wider society.¹⁰⁷ He believes that this 'Orange' sermon was 'not an exposition of evangelical belief but a 'vigorous restatement and reaffirmation of Protestant memory, history and identity'. He argues what mattered to Drew and his congregation was having the right to say what was said and where – on the doorstep of the Roman Catholic community.¹⁰⁸

Dickson cites Frank Wright in his assessment of the power of evangelical religion in Ulster, where he stated that 'the defence of the socialisation process of evangelical Protestantism was more of a universal concern than actual belief in evangelical religion itself'.¹⁰⁹ However, religious conviction is evident in the sermon even if the structure was unusual. Here Drew was using an established format for a religio-political commemoration delivering a discourse of 'use and instruction'.¹¹⁰ These sermons had their roots in the sixteenth century. They were delivered on Church of England calendrical dates that reflected a combination of Christian holidays, special days honouring Protestant monarchs and the ordeals and deliverances of the national church.¹¹¹ Developing a separate existence in the seventeenth century, this calendar of English Protestant thankfulness, watchfulness and commemoration highlighted such events as the Spanish Armada and the Gunpowder Plot becoming more crowded as the century progressed. These calendars represented British identity. Events specific to Ireland, such as the 1641 massacre, were added to the liturgical calendar of observances adopted from the English Church following the Irish Act of Uniformity of 1666, contributing

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, p.8

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, p.124.

¹⁰⁹ F. Wright, 'Ideology', p.251.

¹¹⁰ T. C. Barnard, 'The Uses of 23 October 1641', p.889.

¹¹¹ David Cressy, 'The Protestant Calendar', p.31.

to the idea of Protestants being a 'chosen people'.¹¹² However, the Battle of the Boyne was left out, despite objection, but though unauthorised it was celebrated by the populace.¹¹³ Drew was delivering the sermon that he believed should have had a rightful place in the calendar – a Dublin minister in the previous century observed that its omission from the cycle might 'be numbered among those national sins which provoke the jealous God to visit us again with a more heavy hand'.¹¹⁴

Sermons delivered on these commemorative occasions followed an established formula conveying the perception of Catholics being perfidious, untrustworthy and unchanging. Often the preacher chose a topical event and adapted it to the occasion but the subtext was generally warning, thanks to God and a call to repent.¹¹⁵ The sermon 'defined and affirmed a distinct Protestant identity by highlighting the common history, common interests and common fears of Protestant settlers in Ireland' and fostered devotion to the British monarchy.¹¹⁶ Moreover, it fulfilled a covenant, an obligation to demonstrate acknowledgement of what was regarded as God's mercy towards a chosen people. It was this 'experiential' side of settler ideology, which, it will be argued, merged with evangelicalism to provide a stronger strain attributable to Ulster.¹¹⁷

Making use of the liturgical format meant that the centrality of the biblical text, Dickson's prerequisite for an evangelical sermon, was not adhered to.¹¹⁸

However, the texts on which it was based - Mathew V, chap.13, 14, 15 and 16 - all

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Barnard, 'The Uses of 23 October 1641', p.913; See Chapter 3, pp.174-5.

¹¹⁴ Ibid, p.913.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p.909.

¹¹⁶ J. Kelly, 'The Glorious and Immortal Memory', p.25.

¹¹⁷ See Chapter 3, p.222.

¹¹⁸ Dickson, *Beyond Religious Discourse*, p.180.

encourage men not only to observe their religious duties but to be seen to be active and give an example. This sermon, therefore, combined a familiar format with the urge to evangelical activism. The belief in being a chosen people and the need for commemoration as a religious duty was underlined.

Without delay the whole force proceeded to the bank of the Boyne, where, God blessing the cause of truth, liberty and oppressed Protestants, victory smiled on their banner.

It is therefore to uphold these truths contained in the Bible, to preserve those liberties, the price of which was so costly, and to glorify God from whom all good things come, that godly men all over the world, but specially in our own Protestant Ireland, commemorate the victories of other days and the heroism of our forefathers. We would deserve to have the light withdrawn were we to forget the continental warriors who visited Ireland for the rescue of Protestant Irishmen.

Let the remembrance of the gallant deliverers sustain in our bosoms a comprehensive spirit breathing love and sympathy for Protestants all over the world.¹¹⁹

The main point of Drew's sermon was: what was meant by the description 'true Protestants', what they stood for, and what God might claim from them. Drew believed what constituted a true Protestant was a life of activism, aiming at great things for the sake of Christ not personal benefit, and avoiding passive acceptance of anything perceived to contravene God's laws. The position they had to adopt was active opposition to the Papacy, believed to be the 'common foe'. True Protestants, in his understanding, had to involve themselves in evangelical activism, defence of liberties, the propagation of Protestantism, and commemoration. They were also expected by Drew actively to seek unity with brother Protestants throughout the world, raising themselves above the interests of their own church and the limits of their congregation. These goals were to be pursued till the 'rightful king' (God) came to reign over a regenerated world – this was anticipated sooner rather than later, an indication of his premillennialism.¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ *Inquiry, Belfast*, Drew's sermon, Appendix 1, p.249.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

These were, of course, compatible with Drew's idea of the goals of Orangeism as indicated in rules 2 to 6 of Drew's 'Twenty reasons for being an Orangeman'.¹²¹ The sermon was structured for the Twelfth commemoration service rather than propagation of the Gospel, but it shows an interweaving of covenantal requirements, Protestant principles and evangelical conviction and activism, thus demonstrating militant evangelical credentials.

In Drew's address, he emphasised actively opposing the machinations of the Papacy, the influence of the Holy Spirit, the importance of prayer, having the open Bible in schools, sending the Bible to every land and supporting Protestant liberty in areas opposing the Papacy, like Tuscany and Rome. He used the issue of slavery as a device to indicate the errors of the American slave trade and the Papacy enslaving man. He was talking with evangelical fervour, having called on the Holy Spirit to help him address the various points he wished to emphasise. The fervour was reflected in the strength of the anti-Catholic sentiments expressed in the sermon – against the machinery of the Papacy not individuals. He stated that what Irish cities wanted were men like Walker and his clerical brethren in Derry, both established church and dissenting. He spoke of the British Empire as God-given with the mission to Protestantize the world.¹²² It is clear that while Drew was adhering to the accepted format of the sermon, he was giving it an evangelical spin.

From the content and delivery of the sermon, it seemed that, for him, evangelicalism and Orangeism had become inextricably linked, combining qualities of defence of Protestantism and propagating evangelism as two sides of

¹²¹ Rev. T. Drew, 'Twenty reasons for being an Orangeman', GOLI, first published 1848; See Chapter 4, appendix 2.

¹²² *Inquiry, Belfast*, Appendix 1, pp. 248-252.

the same coin. This encapsulates the essence of evangelical Orangeism and begs the question that if Bebbington's model was adapted to Ulster's circumstances by adding the attribute of defence (of Protestantism), would the sermon fit more comfortably into the criteria required of evangelicalism? Doyle, supporting Hempton and Hill, suggests an appropriate addition to the quadrilateral model for Ulster might be anti-Catholicism¹²³ but this was a quality that remained beneath the surface of evangelicalism generally surfacing in times of crisis and conflict.¹²⁴ In Ulster evangelicalism it was constantly to the fore but it was accompanied by a preoccupation to defend or protect Protestantism. Wright's argument that the focus of Orangeism was preaching and teaching - not necessarily believing - has less relevance in this context when the congregation were, almost certainly, mainly composed of committed militant evangelicals.¹²⁵

For Johnston, too, evangelical Orangeism was the real face of Orangeism. In the wake of the first phase of the riots, following Drew's sermon, he was firm in his denial that Orangemen were responsible for the violence. He argued that there were at least seventy thousand Protestants in Belfast but only about two thousand were Orangemen. He stressed that there were a great number who sympathised with their principles, but they were not card-carrying Orangemen. He emphasised their 'respectability, dress and class'. This claim is supported by Gibbon's point that the dues of the Order (6d or 1 shilling per meeting depending on status) meant that they were a step above the 'lumpen'.¹²⁶ To emphasise the 'quality' of these men, Johnston quoted from an address sent to Rev. Thomas Drew by the Diamond Lodge of Belfast thanking him for his support:

¹²³ Doyle, *Fighting like the Devil*, p.19, Hempton and Hill, *Evangelical Protestantism in Ulster*, pp. 47-61.

¹²⁴ J. Wolfe, 'Anti-Catholicism and Evangelical Identity', p.193

¹²⁵ Wright, 'Ideology', p.251.

¹²⁶ P. Gibbon, *The Origins of Ulster Unionism*, p.95.

We deplore the ignorance of others who, misunderstanding the principles of our glorious institution, are unable to recognise us in the fullness of Christian brotherhood... We are painfully aware that some, knowing the principles of our institution, are base enough to misrepresent them; and we are only too conscious of the fact that such worthy men as you have proved to be, through evil report and good report, are seldom to be met with ... You have stood forward for our cause and for our institution where we could not of ourselves.¹²⁷

It is clear that Johnston regarded Orangemen as devout, respectable men benefitting from the socialising process of evangelicalism which raised them above the mob element. However, their actions in parading to the church, albeit without regalia, were perceived to be provocative and indicative of baser intent by the commissioners investigating the cause of the riots.¹²⁸

In support of this conclusion, Catherine Hirst regards religion itself as being superficial in such conflicts, arguing that it was little more than an ethnic marker for the communities involved. Nationalism and opposition to nationalism was paramount.¹²⁹ However, she does believe that evangelical Protestantism, as a result of the revival, hardened community boundaries.¹³⁰ Farrell argues that it was not the divisions within society themselves that heightened sectarianism but the changing perceptions they evoked - the underlying beliefs and attitudes within the community being of greatest importance. From the Protestant perspective this was Protestant ascendancy.¹³¹ It is argued in this thesis, however, that the church parade (albeit less formal than usual and without regalia) was religio-political. Religious convictions, including a covenantal Calvinism associated with settler ideology, combined with a new wave of strongly anti-Catholic evangelicalism,

¹²⁷ *DP*, 21 Aug. 1857.

¹²⁸ *Inquiry, Belfast*.

¹²⁹ C. Hirst, *Religion, Politics and Violence*, pp.188-89.

¹³⁰ *Ibid*, p.137.

¹³¹ Farrell, *Riots and Rituals*, pp.13-14.

shaped their political beliefs and attitudes. This invested an ethnic and political identity with a perceived covenantal justification and engendered the desire to defend it. As such, it can be argued that there was a strong religious component to the conflict.

The second incident covered was the phase of rioting that took place following open-air preaching at Corporation Square, some 500 yards from the disputed territory of the Customs House where certain Anglican clergy of the Belfast Parochial Mission had recently been constrained from preaching because of sectarian unrest. Janice Holmes' argued that Rev. Hugh Hanna's open-air preaching, on that specific occasion, was in defence of the principle of liberty rather than propagation of the Gospel.¹³² This valid argument tends to separate religious and political motives. However, it may be the case that the combination of interests, both religious and political, in more extreme conservative Protestant opinion, are so closely related that they have to be dealt with together. If one emanates from the other, politics from religion, then separating the two aspects may impede accurate delineation of this particular worldview.

Rev. Hugh Hanna (Presbyterian Minister of Berry Street Congregation) believed it imperative to continue preaching not only for the sake of winning souls but to exercise his civil liberties.¹³³ Hanna was not at this time a member of the Orange Order but his conservative opinion led him to share some of the religio-political values of the Loyalist evangelical set. His perception was that the right to preach and evangelise, fundamental to his religion, was being wrested from him just as the right to commemorate and give honour to God for past glories could be perceived as being wrested from the Orangemen to appease their avowed enemy.

¹³² Holmes, 'Open-Air Preaching', pp.59-60.

¹³³ Hanna's letter to Earl of Carlisle quoted in *Downshire Protestant*, 11 Sept. 1857.

This perceived infringement of rights was believed to result from the authorities' desire to appease the Roman Catholic community. This was, for Hugh Hanna, a dangerous precedent that threatened the future of apostolic conversionism.¹³⁴

Johnston supported Hanna. He said that the frightened bishop of the diocese, cowed by the violence on the streets, had allowed the Gospel to be dictated by a 'Popish mob'.¹³⁵ Hanna, he believed, had come forward in the name of God as Dr. Drew would have done had there been the need. He reinforced the point by saying that he was sure Dr. Drew was thankful to his Presbyterian brother for doing his duty.¹³⁶ (Whether this was, in fact, the case is arguable.)¹³⁷ Cooke initially supported Hanna's action, though he stepped back when the scale of rioting became clear.¹³⁸

Henry Cooke's letter to the *Banner of Ulster* spoke initially about the freedom of the Gospel, then about the civil liberties secured under William III.¹³⁹ Hanna, in a letter to the earl of Carlisle reprinted in the *Downshire Protestant*, defended the Orangemen as being a loyal and orderly body of men that would do credit to any community, echoing Johnston's own view. He spoke of his impartiality in such an assessment as he had recently had a disruption in his own congregation, 'one of the greatest troubles of his life', resulting from his opposing certain Orangemen and resisting coercion into the Conservative Party of Belfast. He stated that he shared Orange principles, though he was not always in agreement with how they were applied politically. But like Orangemen, he cherished certain rights.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁴ *DP*, 11 Sept. 1857.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ Holmes, 'Open-Air Preaching', p.63.

¹³⁸ Holmes, 'Open-Air Preaching', p.61.

¹³⁹ *Banner of Ulster*, 1 Sept. 1857.

¹⁴⁰ *DP*, 11 Sept. 1857.

Hanna followed in the tradition of Cooke as Johnston did that of Drew. He had been taught by Cooke in his denomination's Faculty of Theology.¹⁴¹ Though neither of the Presbyterians was at this time an Orangeman (Hanna joined the Institution for a time at a later period), and Hanna was not a Conservative at this period, the four were bound by conservative principles and politics. They all shared the belief that Roman Catholicism was theologically in error and hostile to political liberty and social advancement. All held sacred the duty and right to evangelise. These precepts were as closely linked as the duality of the principles of the Reformation and the civil and religious liberties of the 1688 Revolution, which in Ulster had particular evangelical resonance. In fact, when these all these values and beliefs were combined with the qualities of evangelical conviction and activism, they formed the basis of Johnstonian militant evangelicalism.

Johnston's coverage of the Ulster Revival of 1859 and the conference of the Evangelical Alliance in Belfast also sheds light on his perception of evangelicalism. The revival was a 'sudden and powerful explosion of intense religious excitement' affecting the Protestant community in Ulster.¹⁴² It affected the community in Down significantly and Johnston monitored the manifestations and effects over the summer months. Those most actively involved were Presbyterians as they constituted the majority in that area, but the Established Church, Methodists and Baptists also participated.¹⁴³ The *Downshire Protestant* recorded its progress scrupulously including in its editions copies of articles from local newspapers as the revival reached their area. Johnston's own view was measured, noting the

¹⁴¹ Holmes, 'Open-Air Preaching', p.60.

¹⁴² Janice Holmes, *Religious Revivals*, p.3.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

importance of 'impartiality' in reporting manifestations.¹⁴⁴ He warned that extraordinary care and caution was required in assessing the movement.¹⁴⁵ Initially, he emphasised the seriousness of what was happening stating that levity and scoffing were inappropriate reactions. He believed that if the movement was led by Satan, then it was the duty of the churches to put a stop to such endeavours as they were damaging to Christianity. He asserted, however, that the 'Romish press' were crying out against it so that was a 'strong argument in its favour' – though the *Freeman's Journal* tended to be more dismissive than hostile.¹⁴⁶ He warned that if the Holy Spirit was involved in this awakening, those who set themselves against it should take care. Conversions, he asserted, would be tested by results in the long term. In the meantime, ministers of all Protestant denominations were 'acting with much prudence'. As the movement progressed, he believed that it was 'the work of God' and 'the Holy Spirit influencing many men's hearts' while remaining sceptical of certain aspects, specifically the physical manifestations.¹⁴⁷ He believed that it was perfectly conceivable that a community could be touched by God's hand. And one point he was most enthusiastic about was the working together of clergy of all denominations.¹⁴⁸ He found denominational unity profoundly encouraging and believed it should be a major goal within religio-political evangelicalism, thus enabling Protestant defence and facilitating the propagation of Protestantism and conversionism.

The concept of unity was implicit within evangelicalism itself and this was given a significant boost by the revival. The evangelical church was not a visible church but embraced a scattered fellowship of those who regarded themselves as true

¹⁴⁴DP, 15 July 1859.

¹⁴⁵Ibid, 10 June 1859.

¹⁴⁶ *Freeman's Journal*, 1 June 1859.

¹⁴⁷DP, 15 Jul. 1859.

¹⁴⁸Ibid.

Christian believers, subscribing to the fundamental doctrines of Protestantism including the divine inspiration of Scripture, the Trinity, justification by grace through faith, the incarnation and atonement. This meant, in theory, that the traditional denominational boundaries were much less relevant and bonding across the boundaries was achievable. Co-operation on voluntary charitable concerns could help this bonding process but for Johnson the most effective body that encouraged such brotherhood was the Orange Order. Johnston and Drew were, of course, Anglican but there were other high ranking individuals who were Presbyterian. For example, in 1862 in the city of Londonderry, the Grand Chaplain and Deputy Grand Chaplain of the Orange Order were both Presbyterians.¹⁴⁹ In 1871, the Presbyterian minister, Rev. Hugh Hanna, like Drew a leader of conservative Protestant opinion, became Grand Master for Donegal Pass, Belfast, having had dealings with the Loyalist organisation, the Apprentice Boys of Londonderry, in the early 1860s.¹⁵⁰

Aside from Johnston's quest for Protestant unity through the machinery of Orangeism, he pursued it in purely evangelical avenues. At a meeting of the Primitive Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society in 1863, which included members of several Protestant denominations, Johnston emphasised the need for unity stating 'Some there were who considered they were entitled to bear the name of Christians while at the same time they refused to extend the right hand of fellowship to those who held the same leading doctrines of Christianity'.¹⁵¹ He added that these people did not know the meaning of Christianity. He believed

¹⁴⁹ GOLI, 3-5 Dec. 1862, Dublin.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 6-8 Dec. 1871.

¹⁵¹ DR, 28 Nov. 1863.

that those who were the true successors of the apostles should continue the practice of Protestant unity and disregard denominational differences.¹⁵²

Unity was also a core principle of the Evangelical Alliance which was founded in London in 1846 and had significant influence throughout northern Europe. However, this was not an attempt at formal institutional unity but rather an endeavour to recognise and accept the concept of unity that in theory already existed in the 'one Christian Church', the evangelical concept of the invisible church.¹⁵³ The means of achieving this was by forming 'a confederation on the basis of great evangelical principles held in common' by members, the goal being to 'cultivate brotherly love, enjoying Christian intercourse' and to promote 'such other objects as they may hereafter agree to prosecute together'.¹⁵⁴ The Evangelical Alliance (EA) had a doctrinal framework (albeit one that reflected the lowest common denominator within evangelical Protestantism) whereas the Orange Order had a framework of both religious and political principles. It was this doctrinal element, and its apolitical stance, that prevented the EA from being yet another association crusading against Roman Catholicism.¹⁵⁵ Its position on this was milder and it restricted itself to collecting information.¹⁵⁶ (The latter task was also an object of Johnston's newspaper.¹⁵⁷) However, vigorous action in opposition to Roman Catholicism was left to organisations like the Protestant Associations and the Orange Order and within their ranks a more militant evangelicalism emerged.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ *Transactions of the Thirteenth Annual Conference held at Belfast on 20-24 Sept. 1859*, (London: Evangelical Alliance - British organisation, 1860), pp.60-61.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, pp.60-61.

¹⁵⁵ I. Randall and D. Hilborn, *One Body in Christ*, p.48.

¹⁵⁶ J. Wolfe, 'The Evangelical Alliance', pp.340-1.

¹⁵⁷ *DP*, 28 Mar. 1861.

The fact that the Alliance decided to hold their thirteenth conference in Belfast indicated their keen interest in the 1859 revival. For them the revival's total disregard for denominational divisions embodied its own central principle of unity.¹⁵⁸ However, even within the Belfast conference such unity could seem somewhat superficial, indicating the difference between aspiration and reality. An incident at the conference demonstrates this. Rev. William McIlwaine had preached against the physical manifestations of the revival in his church and this had been reported in the press. He had stated that while he was sure God's work was being done, there was also a counter work not attributable to God. As a result, his address to the Alliance's conference was badly received and rudely interrupted. Johnston quickly responded in print. 'Is this evangelicalism?' he asked. He stated that if anything was likely to shake the *Downshire Protestant's* good opinion of the revival, it was the behaviour of conference members on that occasion. He added that civil and religious liberty was at an end if a man could not express an unpopular opinion in such a forum. He asked if American mob license was to be imported along with American religionism, by which he meant revivalism. The Alliance, he believed, had done much good in the past and their idea of unity and brotherhood was good, but their behaviour in Belfast was a disgrace.¹⁵⁹ This was an example of Johnston's fair-mindedness but also his evangelical determination on the necessity for Protestant unity.

Johnston responded to various comments made at this time about the revival having a beneficial affect on Orangemen. Indignantly he stated that they did not need saving as there was nothing in Orangeism that was 'incompatible with Christianity in its purest and most Scriptural form'.¹⁶⁰ To a charge that 'some

¹⁵⁸ Holmes, *Religious Revivals*, p.33.

¹⁵⁹ *DP*, 30 Sept. 1859.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 18 Nov. 1859.

Orangemen' were lured into violence, he compared the perceived slur with charges made against St. Paul by the Thessalonians who had themselves engineered the violence. He claimed the fact that there were more Orangemen in church was not as a result of their being 'revived' but a result of the clergy being 'revived' and opening the churches to them.¹⁶¹ For Johnston, the Orangemen were already evangelical Christians active in their work, with St. Paul as their example in spreading the Word. Since there was an obvious disparity between the public's perception of how some Orangemen behaved and Johnston's, this again suggests that Johnston in fact represented an influential element within Orangeism rather than necessarily the full spectrum. There is a parallel to the situation described by Rev. William Alexander, Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, when he stated from the pulpit that the criticism had been made that certain Apprentice Boys only attended church on siege anniversaries.¹⁶² There was a strong evangelical element in this loyalist organisation but some members were not as committed to church-going as others and consequently their religious observance was restricted to sermons relating to religio-political events.

Various articles in the *Downshire Protestant* highlighted other beliefs. Johnston tended to argue that in Protestantism alone, liberty and order were combined and adherence to the faith had resulted in 'England's glory and the safeguard of her empire and her race'.¹⁶³ Though an Ulsterman first and foremost, he was very conscious of Ireland's link with England, his British identity and had great regard for the Empire. His creed was a constant drive for action against anything which might threaten his ideal of conservative evangelicalism. For example, he drew a sharp distinction between what constituted sacred and secular and was intolerant

¹⁶¹ Ibid, 18 Nov. 1859.

¹⁶² LS, 14 Aug. 1873.

¹⁶³ *Speech at United Protestant Demonstration*, 9 Dec. 1869, Belfast, PRONI, D880/7/2.

of other opinions. He abhorred the idea of the Oxford Movement, believing it had 'struck a blow' at the 'tree of life, planted at the Reformation'.¹⁶⁴ He opposed its influence in Anglican churches as exemplified by his campaign against a new picture window in Down Cathedral depicting the Virgin and apostles and was instrumental in having it removed.¹⁶⁵ A comment made by the *Guardian* about the fine internal decoration of the new church of All Saints, Margaret Street, in London and that it could only reflect well on the Bishop of London as 'an instrument for the conversion of souls', brought a swift rejoinder

If sermons are to be found in stones, what need be any to be delivered from the pulpit? If the heart of man is reached by paintings, what need for the exposition of the Bible?

He claimed that the Holy Spirit was being replaced by a new gospel of architecture.¹⁶⁶

In 1857, when discussions were taking place about the revision of the Bible, he firmly opposed the arguments in favour of such action stating that any version was bound to contain imperfections and the 'grand old version' that was in use was superior to other modern versions.¹⁶⁷ Though not opposed to some reform, in many matters which challenged tradition or established beliefs, he was generally a reactionary. In a review of the essays in the *Dublin Magazine* for July 1855 he mentions Lyell's argument for the geological antiquity of the earth and Bunsen's for the antiquity of the human race. He pointed out that Lyell's argument could be reconciled with Scripture whereas Bunsen's could not.¹⁶⁸ He opposed political Liberalism on the ground that it was a traitorous creed that undermined Protestant

¹⁶⁴ *DP*, 20 Jul. 1855.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 17 Oct. 1856.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 10 June 1859.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 13 Feb. 1857.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 15 July 1855.

liberty.¹⁶⁹ Foreign policy, he believed, should be conducted in a manner to support such liberty and avoid giving support to the Papacy.¹⁷⁰ For Johnston Protestant principles were paramount and Roman Catholicism was the greater enemy. Nonetheless, he was a good landlord and his practical liberality in dealing with his Roman Catholic tenants and Downpatrick neighbours was widely acknowledged.¹⁷¹ Further when one of his daughters became a Catholic, he did not interfere with her decision.¹⁷² This fair-mindedness was also an important aspect of the man, though his values, set at an early age, were indicative of a fixed rather than flexible frame of mind.

Johnston's Protestantism was militantly evangelical, his activism mainly channelled through print and in networking through the Protestant associations. It was also covenantal, uncompromising, and Unionist in practice. Premillennial in outlook, he linked Rome with Babylon, the Pope with the Antichrist. Regarding it as a holy duty to protect the crown from the papal machinery, he looked upon Liberalism as a seditious and dangerous creed. He believed the only way of successfully opposing Roman Catholicism was to combine conservative Protestantism and Conservative politics, using the construct as a weapon ideally fashioned to meet the parallel construct of Roman Catholicism: 'This is (what it means) to be a Protestant –to remember the religio-political nature of the Antichrist and meet him with the two edged sword of religio-politics. Nothing else is Protestant.'¹⁷³

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, 11 Jan. 1861.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid, 3 Aug. 1855.

¹⁷¹ F. Wright, *Two Lands on One Soil*, p.317.

¹⁷² McClelland, *William Johnston*, p.104.

¹⁷³ W. Johnston, *Piety in Politics or Practical Protestantism*, 1860, PRONI D/880/7/3.

Protestant Politics and Commemoration

The term Protestant politics refers to religio-politics, those which are derived from religious convictions. Johnston's decision to stand for parliament in 1857 as the Downpatrick representative was prompted by an anxiety to protect Protestant interests in the face of continuing assertiveness from Roman Catholicism and his awareness of the deterioration of sectarian relationships in Ireland and Britain generally. Protestant concern at the perceived 'papal aggression' of 1850 was countered by Roman Catholic unease at Russell's Ecclesiastical Titles Bill and an increasingly trenchant Protestantism. Roman Catholic assertiveness was demonstrated by the rise of the Tenant League and Catholic Defence Association and their subsequent alliance. This was a vital coalition between religious and land movements that, in its way, prefigured the religious, economic and constitutional forces that drove home rule in the 1880s.¹⁷⁴ The mood of discontent among Roman Catholics that had emerged from the famine years and the 1848 rising was giving rise to a mood of perceived insurrection and sedition, a deeper unrest which characterised the Fenian movement of 1858. For Protestants the mood was both defensive in the desire to hold what they had and assertive in their wish to display their identity.

In 1857, Johnston's election address, released in December of the previous year, stated that his object in entering Parliament was to represent Protestantism. He said that 'time serving and paltering politicians have betrayed the Protestant cause'.¹⁷⁵ He judged Richard Ker, his opponent, to be an unworthy representative, not having the confidence of the Protestants of the North of

¹⁷⁴ Jackson, *Ireland 1798-1998*, p.89.

¹⁷⁵ McClelland, *William Johnston*, p.19; *DP*, 19 Dec. 1856.

Ireland, and offered himself as an alternative candidate. His stand was in opposition to the endowment of Maynooth and the perceived state support of Roman Catholicism, and in favour of the maintenance of Protestant endowments. He pledged himself to resist the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland and to support the motion to enlarge the *regium donum*, a state payment to Presbyterian ministers, and make it permanent.¹⁷⁶ Johnston was the popular candidate and initially appeared to have the majority by a show of hands. However, when it went to ballot, pressure was exerted and Johnston received only 1 vote to Ker's 129.¹⁷⁷ This was because Ker was a member of the family that controlled Downpatrick, a rotten borough of less than 200 voters. They leased property to those who would vote on the agent's advice.¹⁷⁸ Though Johnston had the support of William Beers, the County Grand Master of County Down Orange Lodge, who encouraged Orange electors to back Johnston, he was opposed by the parish priest Father Bernard McAuley. Johnston was apparently astonished by this and declared that his battle was 'not with Roman Catholics but with the Church that degrades and enslaves them'.¹⁷⁹ The fact that he lost in such circumstances was also likely to have contributed to his determination to support the secret ballot in 1870¹⁸⁰ after his successful bid for election in 1868 in the wake of his championing of commemoration.

Commemoration describes the pattern of events associated with the marking of historical anniversaries, typically a parade, a church service, a meeting and a social event. Johnston regarded marching to be an important aspect of Ulster Protestantism and objected to the restrictions of the Party Processions Act (1850).

¹⁷⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁸ McClelland, *William Johnston*, p.15.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p.17.

¹⁸⁰ See page 83.

Further legislation intended to curb the practice gained his active opposition when the Party Emblems Act was introduced in 1860.¹⁸¹ The introduction of this act represented a turning point for Johnston. Until then, he had conceded that though it was wrong to proscribe such processions, it was a ruling from the government and Orangemen should obey.¹⁸² Feeling increasingly let down by those in government and the hierarchy of the Orange Order who accepted their decrees, Johnston began to proclaim the necessity of standing on 'God's side'; to emphasise that the time had come for Orangemen to be less subservient.¹⁸³ To stand in passive acceptance was no better than quietism, a stance which he abhorred. The example to follow was that of St. Paul the evangelist who was proactive rather than quietist.¹⁸⁴

The Party Emblems Act (1860) remained on the statute books for five years. It was one of several such acts aimed at preventing party processions in Ireland, following a fatal affray at Derrymacash earlier that year. It supplemented the Party Processions Act (1850) which already banned all party (political) processions, by making illegal

1. The public exhibition of any banner, flag, party emblem, or symbol upon any building or place.
2. Giving wilful permission for the public exhibition of any banner, flag, party emblem, or symbol upon said building or place.
3. Public meetings or parades.
4. The playing of music in any public street, road, or place.
5. The firing of cannons or firearms in any public street, road or place.¹⁸⁵

Until this point, the Londonderry anniversaries did not fall directly under the proscription of the Party Processions Act. However, the new act gave the authorities the flexibility to stop any demonstration they regarded as potentially

¹⁸¹ *DP*, 21 Sept. 1860.

¹⁸² *Ibid*, 4 July 1856.

¹⁸³ *Ibid*, 14 June 1861.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 15 Feb. 1861.

¹⁸⁵ McClelland, *William Johnston*, p.24.

dangerous at a time when the Roman Catholic community in Londonderry were becoming increasingly intolerant of such commemorations. To Johnston this was a further erosion of Ulster Protestantism and from this point a link was established between Johnston and parading issues in Londonderry.

Londonderry had a special position in Ulster Protestant mythology and thus had particular significance for him.¹⁸⁶ He regarded marching in Londonderry as an exercise of a religious right. For him, the marching was not about marking out territory or triumphalism. (He supported equal marching rights in that he was prepared to tolerate Roman Catholic processions.)¹⁸⁷ He stated:

Derry celebrates no party triumph; she celebrates the triumph of right over wrong, of Liberty over oppression, and of the establishment in Ireland of that English rule which the English government seem very anxious, if possible, to end.¹⁸⁸

Of course, by equating Protestantism as inherently right and Roman Catholicism as inherently wrong, this conception was anti-Catholic by its very nature. Johnston stated that, despite the introduction of the act, Londonderry would celebrate the 'Shutting of the Gates' on 18 December that year as was the custom and that people who had not previously taken part in the proceedings were determined to do so at the coming commemoration.¹⁸⁹ Johnston and Drew attended the ceremonies. Johnston joined the Murray Club; Drew gave a lecture on the rise and progress of Protestantism, maintaining that though Derry might be jealous of its ownership of the siege commemorations, it represented a wider principle and should not be offended by the inevitable wave of sympathy from Orangemen,

¹⁸⁶ *Speech at United Protestant Demonstration*, 9 Dec. 1869.

¹⁸⁷ Hirst, *Religion, Politics and Violence*, p.136.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 21 Sept. 1860.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid*.

including those in England and Canada.¹⁹⁰ They believed that Derry must hold its ground and if it did so it would inspire the rest of Ulster.

Traditionally, Protestants in Londonderry tended to regard the anniversaries as local civic events but their perceived oppression by the Party Emblems Act raised their profile within Ulster and allowed them to lead by example. Johnston became an effective advocate for Protestant parading rights in Londonderry and advertised its plight across Ulster, mainly via his own newspaper and Orange networks.¹⁹¹ (A decade later, the raising of Derry's profile had been so successful that when a representative from the Apprentice Boys visited Belfast, after a successful legal battle relating to the Act, he was met by a crowd of twenty thousand, including shipyard workers who had left work for the occasion, to show their solidarity with Derry.¹⁹²) Johnston made every effort to draw together the Protestants of Ulster in common cause. Support of Londonderry was an important element in this campaign.

On 12 August 1862, a great Orange demonstration at the Ulster Hall in Belfast was arranged to coincide with the Apprentice Boys' 'Relief of Derry' commemoration and show solidarity with them.¹⁹³ This highlighted the belief that the Party Emblems Act was aimed at Orangeism in Ulster and not a generic ban intended for all parties and groups. At the heart of the matter for Protestants was the rise of Irish nationalism, illustrated by the founding of Fenianism in 1858 which aimed at overthrowing British power in Ireland. To them it appeared as if Orange

¹⁹⁰ Ibid, 4 Jan. 1861.

¹⁹¹ Ibid, 9 Aug. 1862; S. Farrell, 'Recapturing the Flag: The Campaign to Repeal the Party Processions Act, 1860-72', *Eire-Ireland*, XXXII, no. Summer/Fall (1997).

¹⁹² Wright, *Two Lands on One Soil*, p.340.

¹⁹³ *DP*, 9 Aug. 1862.

symbols were being proscribed while they believed nationalist and Fenian parades were being held with impunity in the south.¹⁹⁴

The importance of the concept of parading and displaying Protestant symbols was indicated by Johnston's comments on the agenda published in the newspaper advertising the Great Protestant Demonstration to be held on 17 September 1862 at Belfast's Botanic Gardens, an Ulster-wide event not confined to Orangemen.¹⁹⁵ He stated that Maynooth would be discussed but the more important issues of the Party Emblems Act and Party Processions Act would take precedence.¹⁹⁶

Johnston did not rate anything more important than his religion, and Maynooth had always been a crucial issue for Johnston. He had maintained in 1855 that upholding Maynooth was upholding Popery, idolatry, immorality and treason.¹⁹⁷ Therefore it follows that these parading rights must have had definite religious connotations for him. The expression of Protestant identity at this particular juncture, when nationalism was becoming an issue, had become even more crucial. On 17 September, a united body of 'tens of thousands' of Anglicans, Presbyterians and Wesleyans, evangelical in outlook rather than necessarily Orange, gathered to object to:

The proscription of Protestant symbols and, while Popish symbols have been displayed with impunity; the destruction of civil liberties of Protestants and the extension of the political power of the Papacy; the undue depression of Protestant interest and the great encouragement given to Papists.¹⁹⁸

Johnston adopted this advocacy with evangelical fervour, challenging the Orange hierarchy by leading illegal processions and, in 1867, enduring a brief spell of imprisonment rather than pleading guilty to an infringement of the law and having

¹⁹⁴ McClelland, *William Johnston*, p.25.

¹⁹⁵ *DP*, 30 Aug. 1862.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 30 Nov. 1855.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 20 Sept. 1862.

the charge dismissed. He emerged as a righteous and independent figure, believing in Protestant principle and power and in direct action. On the basis of this reputation, Johnston was nominated by the Belfast Protestant Working Men's Association (BPWMA), an association of Orange artisans set up for the purpose of returning Johnston to parliament, as an independent Conservative candidate for Belfast representing the interests of the working man.¹⁹⁹ Johnston's defeat in 1857 and his success after the extension of the franchise (1868) indicate the level of society where his core supporters came from, though he also benefited from Liberal and Roman Catholic support. It seems likely that the Liberals supported him because of his stance on disestablishment.²⁰⁰ Roman Catholics voted for him because they liked his distance from the Tories and because they shared some 'radical' views.²⁰¹ Hugh Hanna gave support by helping to draft his relatively 'radical' address demanding reform, the ballot, and concessions to the 'peculiar interests of labour'. Drew also gave his support denouncing wealthy northern landlords on whose estates 'the screw is never withdrawn from its circuitous and oppressive work'.²⁰² His campaign could be said to have benefitted from evangelical collaboration.

Johnston's candidature, however, caused a division in Belfast Conservatism with the Ulster Protestant Defence Association focussed on the defence of the Irish Church and the BPWMA more interested in opposing the Party Processions Act. Moreover, they refused to take directions from Anglican clergy on the matter. Yet, pan Protestantism was more important in the ideology of the BPWMA than the working man's economic interest as they advocated partnership with capitalist interests. In politics also, they desired partnership wishing to be consulted rather

¹⁹⁹ Farrell, *Riots and Rituals*, p.164.

²⁰⁰ See p.80; Wright, *Two Lands on One Soil*, p.314.

²⁰¹ Ibid. p.325.

²⁰² Hoppen, *Elections, Politics and Society in Ireland, 1832-1885*, p.317-8.

than being taken for granted. However, this pan Protestantism was qualified by a belief in 'Orange democracy'. They expected their concerns for issues like the PPA to be acted upon.²⁰³ Johnston was elected MP by a convincing margin in 1868 as a result of the support of the newly enfranchised working-class men.

In Parliament his evangelical individualism was obvious from the start. One of the first issues Johnston had to respond to as an MP was the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland. Orange peers and clerics were closely involved in the 'Church Defence' movement in November 1868, when Gladstone came to power.

Gladstone had promised to disestablish and disendow the Church of Ireland.

Disestablishment had been on the horizon for some time and had been addressed by Johnston in his earlier, unsuccessful attempt to become MP for Downpatrick in 1857. He had said in his address to electors that 'he believed that the Protestant endowments of the country should be maintained'.²⁰⁴

By 1868, although still in favour of maintaining the Church of Ireland in theory, he could not reconcile with his conscience the Conservative amendment to the Bill to 'level up'. That would mean endowing Roman Catholicism and this was not acceptable to evangelicals. He spoke in the Commons on behalf of the Ulster Presbyterians on 3 May 1869, having been asked to do so following the Great Presbyterian Demonstration in Belfast in favour of Protestant endowments on 29 April. At the end of the proceedings Hugh Hanna stated that Mr. Johnston would be asked to air their view, adding that Johnston had given greatest satisfaction to his constituents by his conduct in parliament and would discharge the duties

²⁰³ Hirst, *Religion, Politics and Violence*, pp.131-137.

²⁰⁴ McClelland, *William Johnston*, p.16.

well.²⁰⁵ Johnston formed his statement as a response to the Liberal MP for Londonderry, Richard Dowse's statement in the Commons on 23 April. Dowse had spoken in favour of the Church Bill, stating that he represented Roman Catholics generally, the majority of Presbyterians and Nonconformists and a minority of Episcopalians. Johnston stated that the Presbyterian body quoted as being in favour of the Bill was the Belfast Liberal Association and their view was not shared by the Conservative Presbyterians who made up the largest and most influential section of Presbyterian opinion. The latter had met, in the largest meeting ever convened in Belfast, to object to the Bill. He added that Conservative Presbyterians objected to being associated with taking part of the Church of Ireland's funds and also to Maynooth receiving such funds.²⁰⁶ The Presbyterian view was very similar to his own view.

On 7 May, he stated that he regretted the proposal from the Conservative side of the House to 'level up'. He said that he preferred disestablishment and disendowment to concurrent endowment.²⁰⁷ On the third reading of the Church Bill, he restated his objection to disestablishment. He admitted that the Church needed some reform. In earlier years, he had had more than a few criticisms. For example, he felt that it was abandoning the 'Reformation standard', in that the bishops and deans were almost always appointed on their political connections and were more concerned with self interest than with Protestant principles.²⁰⁸ And in 1861, he supported church reform believing something should be done to redistribute revenues. He felt it was not in God's interest to make princes of

²⁰⁵ *Proceedings of the Great Presbyterian Demonstration in Belfast in favour of Protestant Endowments in Ireland*, 29 April 1869, Ulster Hall, Belfast, p.56.

²⁰⁶ *Hansard*, 31 May 1869, vol.196, c1040-41.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid*, 7 May 1869, vol.196, c.402.

²⁰⁸ *DP*, 18 Jan. 1856.

bishops and archbishops and paupers of the curates.²⁰⁹ However, he denied the need to destroy it. He re-stated that the majority of Protestants in Ireland were strongly opposed to the Bill. However, he stressed he could not support concurrent endowment as the alternative. It was feared that disestablishment was the first step in dissolving the Union between Ireland and Great Britain but Johnston stated that nothing would crush the spirit of Protestantism. Even if this eventuality came to pass, he believed the Protestants of Ireland would be perfectly able to take care of themselves.²¹⁰ Here Johnston was refusing to conform to Conservative policy because his conscience dictated otherwise. He was exercising what he called Protestant politics - putting his religious convictions first and foremost.

Part of Johnston's confidence in the state of Protestantism may have been based on his familiarity with the voluntarism of Belfast through Thomas Drew. Drew was a central figure in a growing number of voluntary societies which had developed in Belfast under the aegis of the Established Church.²¹¹ It is considered that the strength of the Irish Church in this period was due to the 'invasion of voluntarism' rather than its established status. In this way, the Belfast Church had achieved a resilience and identity that owed much to voluntarism with its release of lay energy and input.²¹² Also, a real advantage of disestablishment, as far as Johnston was concerned, was the fact that Maynooth would be disendowed. The Maynooth grant and its implications for the country, believing as he did in the prospect of divine retribution, had been a constant concern.

²⁰⁹ Ibid, 24 May 1861.

²¹⁰ *Hansard*, 31 May 1869, vol.196, c.1040-41.

²¹¹ Kerr, 'Voluntarism', pp.347-62.

²¹² Ibid, p.362.

In the period immediately following disestablishment, Johnston contributed in an active manner within the Church to counter undue ritualism and hierarchical influence. In his role as a member of the Down and Connor Diocesan Synod, he attended locally and at the national synod in Dublin. His Low Church views meant that he was particularly concerned that lay representation was strong. He recorded in his diary that, as a result of his proposal, the lay to clerical representation had been increased to two (lay) to one (clerical) on his amendment to Napier's resolution, in the realignment of the Irish Church.²¹³ Two decades later, he was still pursuing his goal of keeping ritualism and undue clerical influence to a minimum, noting that the synod was not as 'Protestant' as it had been previously. By Protestant, he meant conservative evangelical.²¹⁴

Another difficult decision, which further demonstrated the nature of his Protestantism, was his support of the introduction of the secret ballot in parliamentary elections. While the majority of Orangemen of all classes were united in opposing the ballot in the belief that it would strengthen the position of Roman Catholics, Johnston felt it was a good innovation and a basic right of the common man. In a meeting of the masters and deputy masters of Orange Lodges in Belfast, held on 20th May 1870, Johnston stated:

Is a vote not a trust which is given to him (man) which he is bound to discharge as he considers his duty to God and his country, and that no other person, be he priest, landlord, or employer, has a right to say how he is to give it, or dictate to him as to the manner in which it is bestowed?²¹⁵

It was a decision which lost him much of his popularity at the time but he felt he had to be true to his conscience. Defending himself to his Orange peers he stated:

²¹³ Diary, 12 Oct. 1869.

²¹⁴ Ibid, 11 April 1888.

²¹⁵ McClelland, *William Johnston*, pp.67-68.

For twenty years I have endeavoured to do my duty as an Orangeman – endeavoured to maintain the principles of the Orange Institution at considerable odds, and under much discouragement but cheered and countenanced by all the warm support of the artisans and yeomanry of Ulster. It is not a matter of light moment to me that I should lose their confidence and support. At the same time, I don't hesitate to say that I feel satisfied in my conscience, I have no ulterior reason for taking the course I have taken; but after full consideration, and believing it not to be injurious to the interests of Protestantism²¹⁶

Johnston was motivated by the evangelical stress on individual responsibility before God. Consequently this made him follow his conscience rather than the agenda of Orangeism. The idea of improving the lot of man was central to the ideology of evangelicalism.²¹⁷ As ever, his politics followed from his religious convictions and he resigned from the Orange Order for a six month period after the Grand Lodge passed a resolution opposing the ballot in June 1871.²¹⁸ Why he rejoined in December 1871, retreating on the issue and opposing the ballot, is uncertain. Wright suggests that the implications of the bigger picture, in the shape of the perceived threat to Protestantism of home rule, had to be given precedence.²¹⁹ This issue, he believed, was combined with the knowledge that he (Johnston) could not win an election in Belfast again if he was both opposed to home rule (thus losing the Roman Catholic vote) and weakened within the Orange Order.²²⁰ It seems logical that Johnston would have prioritised seeing it as his duty to fight the Protestant cause in parliament as for as long as he was able.

Johnston is best known for his advocacy of the repeal of the Party Processions Act (1850). The repeal of the Act was his key motivation for entering parliament and his success was the highlight of his political career. Johnston saw the act as an

²¹⁶ Ibid, pp.67-68.

²¹⁷ Hempton and Hill, *Evangelical Protestantism in Ulster*, p.117.

²¹⁸ GOLI, 7-8 June 1871, Londonderry.

²¹⁹ Wright, *Two Lands on One Soil*, p.339.

²²⁰ Ibid.

infringement of his civil and religious liberties and this view was shared by many of the Protestant populace. The bid to remove the act from the statute books was concentrated over a three year period, Johnston first introducing the bill on 18 February 1869.

At this time, the 1850 Act was the last remaining of a series of acts imposed in the nineteenth century in order to prevent sectarian clashes between marchers and protesters. (The Party Emblems Act of 1860 had lapsed in 1865.) It was imposed after the affray at Dolly's Brae, near Tollymore, County Down, between Orangemen and Roman Catholic protesters. Johnston's election to parliament in 1868 had been achieved on the basis of the reform act of 1867 which had enfranchised many of the male working classes. Parading and other forms of populist Protestant politics were more important to them than to the higher echelons of the Orange Order who viewed the practice as seriously detrimental to public peace. For Protestants the situation was exacerbated by the perception that the Act was not being applied equally and supporters of nationalism in the South were being allowed to process unmolested. Since their marches tended not to cause the public affray that Orange marches caused in the North, there may have been some truth in this accusation. Certainly Johnston wrote to Disraeli in 1872 describing a public gathering for the French Deputation held in Dublin and Cork which he described as having a 'most glaring party and republican character'. He also enclosed a clipping from the *Morning Mail* of 27 December 1870 describing a demonstration at the inauguration of the unveiling of the statue of William Smith O'Brien, leader of the Young Ireland movement.²²¹ This referred to the carrying of green banners and bands playing the 'Marseillaise'. But even in the North, the legislation was enforced erratically, ranging between rigid adherence and outright

²²¹ Bodleian Library, Hughenden deposit, Disraeli papers, B/xxi/J/74.

neglect.²²² This apparent lack of parity was particularly distressing to Johnston and his supporters and for them it took precedence over the disestablishment issue. The Conservative party regarded the Church question as the most important religious issue and Johnston was regarded as pandering to the lower orders in order to gain popularity. But popularity with the electorate was not the heart of the issue for Johnston. The key lay in his view of Protestantism.

He abhorred undue ritual in church but found a place for it removed from the centre of religious observance. Protestantism, based on the Word of God, had to be kept pure and unsullied by ritual or any other influence or distraction in church. However, Protestant symbols were important, especially in a period when Roman Catholic and nationalist symbols were becoming increasingly visible. Activism, both political and religious, had to be undertaken against Rome to propagate and protect Protestantism, and commemoration, a necessary part of propagation, fulfilled a religious duty. Rather than being illustrated separately, the Word and commemoration might be represented by concentric circles with pure Protestantism at the heart. The symbols and banners of the commemorative marches were believed to be equivalent of those of the tribes of Israel who were held to have remembered their covenant and given honour to God in such a ritualistic manner.²²³ Therefore, it followed that the ritual practice of loyalist marches had a religious significance for him that was beyond the mere practice of popular culture. In contrast, the severing of the connection from the more High Church leanings of the English Church and the independence thus gained was, perhaps, for him the silver lining of the cloud of disestablishment.²²⁴

²²² Farrell, *Riots and Rituals*, p.156.

²²³ *DR*, 14 Jul. 1866; Wright, *Two Lands on One Soil*, p.341.

²²⁴ *Hansard*, 31 May 1869, vol. 196, cc.1040-41.

Before his entry into politics, Johnston's first challenge to the Party Processions Act involved participating in the commemoration in Londonderry in December 1860. In the *Downshire Protestant* in September 1860 he foretold that Derry would stand firm in resolve and in December, after the event, he praised that resolve.²²⁵ From this point, he became active in a public campaign to repeal the Party Processions Act. In 1861, he warned that Orangemen would no longer observe the terms of the Act, as they had done in the past.²²⁶ Between December 1860 and 1865 Johnston went to Derry to take part in commemorative events on four occasions. In 1864, he gave his support and organised a petition for four Gilford mill workers who had been sentenced for parading behind pipes and drums on 14 July 1863. Their sentencing in County Down was followed by a procession of sixty thousand in Dublin in honour of Daniel O'Connell. Emblems were worn but no prosecutions occurred.²²⁷ This parade was the event which triggered the 1864 Belfast riots.

Farrell regards this as the point when Johnston became actively engaged in the processions issue though he cites Derry in December 1860 as the first concrete challenge to the government. He believes that the 'pervasive sense of crisis needed to mobilize such an undertaking simply did not exist in 1860.'²²⁸ However, Johnston's continuing activity in Derry combined with his editorials, suggests that the campaign was well underway from that point.²²⁹ In 1865, Lord Enniskillen, Grand Master of the Orange Order, proposed that Johnston rethink his plan for holding a parade on the Twelfth at the 'Maze'. Johnston cancelled the event.²³⁰ In 1865, Johnston wrote a letter criticising the Grand Master's address which urged

²²⁵ *DP*, 21 Sept. 1860, 21 Dec. 1860.

²²⁶ *Ibid*, 14 June 1861.

²²⁷ Farrell, *Riots and Rituals*, pp.159, 161.

²²⁸ Farrell, 'Recapturing the Flag', p.58.

²²⁹ Farrell, *Riots and Rituals*, p.160-161.

²³⁰ *GOLI*, 3-4 May 1865, Armagh.

members to obey the law and not march on the Twelfth even if this was perceived to contravene Orangemen's civil and religious liberties. The Grand Master also asked them to be vigilant against disloyalty to the British constitution

The perfection of our organisation gives us the means of rendering services of incalculable importance to our country at this time; use those means advisedly, extend our organisation and observe in all respects a vigorous compliance with the laws; exercise the utmost vigilance in suspected localities. You have ample means of detection.²³¹

Johnston's interpretation of Enniskillen's address was that Orangemen were being asked to act as spies and provide information against suspected Fenians. This sort of behaviour, he asserted, was degrading. Johnston had to make a full apology.²³² In 1866, he organised a Grand Protestant Demonstration on his estate at Ballykilbeg. Although he was requested to cancel it by the Under-Secretary for Ireland, Thomas Larcom, the meeting went ahead. The resolutions read out to the assembly indicated the religious significance of commemoration and highlighted the importance of Protestant union and the vehicle of religio-politics:

1. That trusting in the Lord God of Hosts as our refuge and strength, we desire gratefully to thank Him for the gift of Protestant truth and Protestant freedom, recognising His hand in the courage of our forefathers, in their noble protest, in the victories gained, and in civil and religious liberty, though imperilled, triumphant.
2. That it is the imperative duty of all who value God's truth and man's liberty vigilantly to resist all efforts made for their suppression and therefore there is urgent need for Protestant Union, decided action, and such a religio-political organisation as that presented in the Orange Institution, which has rendered high services to the state at home, and, at this time in British North America, has sent forth thousands of volunteers to fight for the English crown and British connection. (This refers to the Fenian raids on Canada in 1866.)
3. That, according to others, the utmost freedom in the expression of their religious and political sympathies, and leaving the Crown to deal as it thinks best with any attempted infringement of its rights, it is manifestly impolitic, ungenerous, and unjust to continue on the Statute Book a law which discourages loyal and Protestant manifestations, and which has been

²³¹ McClelland, *William Johnston*, pp.29-30.

²³² GOLI, 6-8 Dec. 1865, Dublin.

administered in a spirit of one-sided hostility to those who revere the glorious memory of 'the greatest sovereign this country has to boast of'.²³³

In these resolutions, the religious rationale for opposing the Act is clearly demonstrated. His decision to defy the Act and his subsequent refusal to accommodate the authorities, who did not want martyrs, by admission of fault and avoidance of gaol led to his achieving martyr status within Orangeism. Johnston's popularity soared and from this point his way to parliament was assured.

The bill to repeal the Act was introduced on 18 February 1869 by Johnston and seconded by the Liberal MP for Tralee, The O'Donoghue of the Glens, great-nephew of Daniel O'Connell. Though O'Donoghue did not approve of processions which he believed reminded people of times when their ancestors were in hostile bands, he believed the Act only caused resentment.²³⁴ Johnston spoke at greater length on 16 March 1869. He said that the 1850 act had been triggered by the demonstration at Tollymore in 1849 which was a result of the antagonism relating to the 1848 rebellion which the Orangemen had been asked by the government to help put down. The ensuing fight at Dolly's Brae triggered the act. In what was a fair-minded speech, he stated that Fenians were honest and sincere in their objectives but were mistaken in their wish to separate Ireland from Britain. He also pointed out that Daniel O'Connell had objected to the 1832 Processions Act when it was first introduced stating that Roman Catholics rejoiced in King William's victory and King James' defeat. Johnston paid homage to O'Connell stating that he himself would not be worthy of the name of Irishman if he did not pay tribute to the man who fought the battle for his co-religionists.²³⁵

²³³ Quoted McClelland, *William Johnston*, p.31.

²³⁴ *Hansard*, 18 Feb. 1869, Vol.194, c.122.

²³⁵ *Ibid*, 16 Mar. 1869, vol.194, c.1547.

He asserted that, as the Act was not equally applied, to ensure fair play there were really three alternatives to be considered. These were: to tolerate all Green processions and oppose Orange; to suppress all impartially; or to tolerate all peaceable demonstrations, Orange and Green. Canada, he pointed out, had adopted option three.²³⁶ On the second reading on 30 March 1870, Johnston stressed that he had no desire to hurt or offend his Roman Catholic fellow countrymen. He said the real offenders were not the peaceable citizens who paraded in orange or green scarves but ruffians whose political insanity made them resent the use of such emblems. He again asserted that those who took part in Orange demonstrations were not the participants in the outrages that disgraced Ireland.²³⁷ During the period that Johnston was leading the campaign to repeal the act in parliament, he was also maintaining pressure through Orange demonstrations and the Londonderry anniversaries.

Since 1867, the act had been enforced only in Londonderry against the processions of the Apprentice Boys since other Orange parades were proscribed at this time by the Orange hierarchy and civil authorities and Orangemen generally accepted this. Johnston's Bangor parade was an exception.²³⁸ The siege of Londonderry had particular significance for Ulster Protestants and Johnston made a point of highlighting these associations. In his speech at the United Protestant Demonstration in 1869, Johnston emphasised that religious and civil freedoms had been united with the sacrifice of Protestant lives at the siege of Londonderry. Here the 'Protestant religion and the liberties of England were joined, in holy union, on the banner of the Orange Prince'.²³⁹ He encouraged cross denominational

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Ibid, 30 Mar. 1870, vol.200, c.938-40.

²³⁸ McClelland, *William Johnston*, p.69.

²³⁹ *Speech of Wm Johnston, Esq, M.P. at the Ulster United Protestant Demonstration, 1869.*

support for Derry's commemorations and unity of purpose with the Apprentice Boys' Association.

Chichester Fortescue (Chief Secretary for Ireland) introduced an amendment to the Party Processions Act in 1870. This meant that all processions, not just political ones, liable to affect the peace would be banned. Johnston opposed it saying that the freedom of the Irish people would be even more constrained than previously. He asserted that blood would flow as a result if this were imposed on Ireland. Orange lodges passed resolutions opposing this proposed amendment, some even considering the benefits of repeal of the Union.²⁴⁰ At a mass meeting of Orangemen in Lisburn on the Twelfth, the Apprentice Boys' resolution was read aloud. The Apprentice Boys pledged to resist the amendment by every legitimate means and called on all Protestants of every denomination to aid them. They also pledged their support to those who felt it their duty to resist this infringement of their liberties.²⁴¹ The city of Londonderry had been proclaimed in 1869 following a sectarian clash in May. This meant that the Lord Lieutenant had prohibited public demonstrations and the firing of canons. A telegram was read aloud, having come from Londonderry that morning stating that the orange and blue flag had been hoisted from Walker's Pillar under the salute of three guns, though the city had been proclaimed and such demonstrations were forbidden by law. The Governor of the Apprentice Boys, John Guy Ferguson, was encouraged by Johnston to speak at the meeting.²⁴² The conflict continued in Londonderry in 1870 and 1871 as the act was flouted on the anniversary dates, 12 August and 18 December, and Roman Catholic protesters made their objections felt in print and on the street. In

²⁴⁰ McClelland, *William Johnston*, p.63.

²⁴¹ *BNL*, 13 Jul. 1870.

²⁴² *Ibid.*

1871, *The Times* correspondent reported that Johnston appeared to have assumed chief command of the Derry anniversaries.²⁴³

Johnston told those about to march in opposition to the Act to 'have the honour of your city at heart and give no offence. Do these and the blessings of God, you cannot doubt, will rest upon you.' Afterwards, Johnston gave a speech in which he stated that he had violated the proclamation and dared the government to take action.²⁴⁴ Johnston was convinced that he was on a religious mission. He carried the battle into the House of Commons questioning the suppression of the anniversaries and the proclamation of the city in 1871 and allowing processions in Dublin and Cork while prohibiting the Derry celebrations in 1871.²⁴⁵ Johnston's motion raised the now familiar arguments but, unexpectedly, in the middle of the debate the Chief Secretary of Ireland, the Marquis of Hartington, stated that the government were now prepared to support Johnston's proposed repeal. The Act had been a focus for discontent for some time²⁴⁶ and as the government had not, during its tenure of office, prosecuted anyone under the Act, it was prepared to repeal it relying on established measures to deal with breach of the peace rather than using special legislation.²⁴⁷ Johnston's bill for repeal of 11 April passed rapidly through both houses. It received the Royal Assent on 17 June 1872. Farrell makes the very valid point that for the government the Party Processions Act was merely symbolic but jubilant loyalist reaction to the repeal showed how important such symbols were in Ulster.²⁴⁸

²⁴³ *The Times*, 14 Aug. 1871.

²⁴⁴ *LS*, 15 Aug. 1871.

²⁴⁵ *Hansard*, 18 Aug. 1871, 22 Mar. 1872.

²⁴⁶ Farrell, 'Recapturing the Flag', pp.63-64.

²⁴⁷ *Hansard*, 22 Mar. 1872, vol.210, c.535-41.

²⁴⁸ Farrell, 'Recapturing the Flag', p.77.

The next focus for Johnston was home rule, or Rome rule as he called it.²⁴⁹

On 7 July 1874, Johnston wrote to Disraeli enclosing a programme for an anti-home rule meeting sponsored by the Grand Orange Lodge of Belfast to be held on 13 July at Lambeg. Among the resolutions to be read was:

2. That ...(we intend to) oppose by every constitutional means, the movement in favour of Repeal of the Union between Great Britain and Ireland, now brought forward under home rule.²⁵⁰

It was believed that the interests of Protestants in Ireland would be injured and the greatness of the Empire impaired.

On 17 July, Johnston spoke in the House of Commons objecting to the motion for home rule. He stated that the people of Ulster were perfectly satisfied with the British connection and wished to remain an integral part of the British Empire. He stated the real objective for dividing Ireland from Great Britain was for Rome to gain ascendancy and that any such disintegration of the Empire would be resisted to the last. These messages were reiterated on 24 April 1877 when he warned that the implementation of home rule would set race against race and creed against creed, that the result would be bloody and disastrous.²⁵¹ Though Buttite home rule was 'federalist' and 'gentrified' and repudiated any tendency towards 'machine politics', sectarian ascendancy and agrarian revolution, to Johnston the prospect of home rule was totally inconceivable.²⁵²

Johnston had a post in the Department of Fisheries from 1878-86. However, the implication of Parnellite home rule brought him back into politics. The main

²⁴⁹ *Weekly Northern Whig*, 23 Jun. 1871; Wright, *Two Lands on One Soil*, p.339.

²⁵⁰ GOL Belfast programme of anti home rule meeting, Lambeg, 13 July 1874, Bodleian Library, Hughenden deposit, B/xii/J/82a.

²⁵¹ *Hansard*, 20 Mar. 1874, vol.218, c.148-50.

²⁵² Jackson, *Ireland 1798-1998*, p.112.

concerns about home rule at this juncture were that Roman Catholic ascendancy would be the inevitable result and persecution of the Protestant community would follow. It was feared that Ulster Protestants would be deprived of their imperial heritage and this would result in their reduced status in the world. Moreover, it was believed that lawlessness would be an inevitable result and this would culminate in the social and political ruin of the island. Betrayal of Loyalism was a significant factor but it was also feared that Ulster would be forced to shoulder the fiscal and economic burden of Ireland.²⁵³ Different perspectives resulted in different emphases. Primarily Johnston was alarmed about the covenantal implications for Britain. In March 1886 in the House, he asked the prime minister to appoint a day of humiliation and prayer as a national appeal to Almighty God.²⁵⁴ He feared divine retribution for the course Britain appeared to be taking.

Another focus for concern was the threat to the union and to the extension of Protestant unity within the Empire. Such unity was a feature of Orangeism but was also a personal preoccupation of Johnston's as he had in 1865 undertaken to stimulate a 'more intimate and constant intercourse between the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland and England, Scotland and the colonies', the object being the 'extension of Orangeism and the furtherance of truth'.²⁵⁵ Johnston reiterated these points in Londonderry in 1888, at the August commemoration, where he described the integrity of the Union as:

the sole guarantee alike for the continued greatness and stability of the Empire, the safety of life and property in Ireland and the spread of prosperity and civilisation throughout our land.²⁵⁶

²⁵³ Hempton and Hill, *Evangelical Protestantism in Ulster*, p.180.

²⁵⁴ *Hansard*, 18 Mar. 1886, vol.330, c.1182.

²⁵⁵ GOLI, 6-8 Dec. 1865, Dublin, p.16.

²⁵⁶ LS, 14 Aug. 1888.

Before his election to parliament in 1868, Johnston had been impatient with the Tory establishment who, he believed, expected loyalty but did not show loyalty to their followers.²⁵⁷ From his perspective, the choices of the Conservative party were due to party considerations of survival and advancement and this was morally wrong. Their failure to remove the Party Processions Act was a case in point. His conception of Irish Conservatism was not to change for the sake of change but to preserve what was right and true while, at the same time, avoiding being unnecessarily reactionary.²⁵⁸ He also believed that brotherly Protestant unity should rise above party agendas. On his election as MP for Belfast, he represented no particular set of interests, but Protestant issues were paramount. His speech at the United Protestant Demonstration (1869) stated:

To Protestantism, Conservative and Liberal have been alike untrue. We must have done with the worship of fetishes. We must cease to be the panders to party. A crisis is at hand when the old leaders will fail, and the old cries be worthless. Take Protestantism as the basis of a party; be Protestants you brothers, in every clime and land! ²⁵⁹

By 1880, Johnston was in a much stronger position to achieve such a goal as Liberal dissent was beginning to find common ground with the Conservatives, the issue of home rule beginning to unite Protestants in Ulster where other issues had failed. Working with like-minded MPs and members of the aristocracy, and in himself representing the popular branch of Belfast Protestantism, Johnston was instrumental in establishing the Ulster Constitutional Union in 1880. This was an early attempt at a separate Ulster Conservative organisation, which the Marquis of Hamilton in a letter to Johnston called 'the edifice which you founded and reared'.²⁶⁰ In 1883, the Ulster Constitutional Club was founded accommodating

²⁵⁷ *Great Public Meeting, Grand Lodges of Belfast*, 14 May 1861; *BNL* 15 May 1861.

²⁵⁸ *DP*, 1 Mar. 1861.

²⁵⁹ *Speech of William Johnston MP, at the United Protestant Demonstration*, 1869.

²⁶⁰ *Diary*, 25 Dec. 1880.

the Belfast commercial elite. Both these organisations were to be 'organisational pivots' for the Ulster Unionist movement.²⁶¹ Johnston now found himself in a position where he could realistically hope to achieve the Protestant political agenda and unity that he had long desired.

Evangelicalism and the British Empire

As well as unity at home, Johnston had long been interested in Protestant unity within the British Empire and believed Orangeism, with its religio-political structure, was the vehicle to achieve this. He stated:

We rejoice to hear of the progress of Orangeism in the United Kingdom in Canada and other dependencies of the British Crown, and believing our Loyal Organisation is a tower of strength in the Empire and increasingly necessary for the maintenance of civil and religious liberties, we hereby renew our attachment to its principles.²⁶²

Johnston's idea of Protestant unity was based in his view of social organisation. He did not believe in the idea of 'liberty, equality and fraternity' because that would not happen till the Second Coming. He did, however, believe in the brotherhood of man as showed in his allusion to slavery;

that no man has a right to hold property in man; that freedom is man's inalienable birthright; that every man should do all he could to make every man as happy and good as the Almighty Father intended His children to be.²⁶³

He had shown this commitment in his support for Tenant Right though he refused to attend public meetings where the issue was treated as a party political one.²⁶⁴ This was in no way 'radical'. Drew had already come under fire for speaking out

²⁶¹ Jackson, *Ireland 1798-1998*, p.218.

²⁶² GOL Belfast programme of anti home rule meeting, Lambeg, 13 July 1874, resolution 1, Bodleian Library, Hughenden deposit, B/xii/JJ/82a.

²⁶³ DP, 30 Nov. 1855.

²⁶⁴ *Northern Whig*, 3 Nov. 1869.

on this matter and had also expressed the belief that no man should be so thoroughly in another man's power as to be liable to 'ejection at any time' from his home.²⁶⁵ Johnston had supported the secret ballot on the same principle. His evangelical beliefs committed him to improving the lot of his fellow men. He suggested the extension of Disraeli's 1874 Factories Bill to Ireland, despite the inevitable displeasure of Belfast mill owners.²⁶⁶ He also supported the amendment of the Land Act (1870) which allowed the purchase of land by occupied tenants. He stated in the House that there were many on both Liberal and Conservative sides of the House who would wish justice to the Irish tenants.²⁶⁷ He also supported franchise reform in Ireland, stating Ireland was out of step with England and Scotland and he supported equal rights and fairness.²⁶⁸ Here he was demonstrating his evangelical belief in striving to better the life of his fellow men and indicating a paternalism that was evident from an early age in his attitude to his tenants.

His insistence that foreign policy should be conducted with Protestant rights and liberties in mind reflected his belief in a Protestant brotherhood.

England should be the champions of poor oppressed Protestants everywhere, and that the nation that persecutes any man for reading the Word of God should be made to feel that no more than a nation of pirates is it fit to share in friendly relations with our great Protestant nation.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁵ *Freeman's Journal*, 3 Oct 1868.

²⁶⁶ Letter to Disraeli, 1 Jul. 1874, Bodleian Library, Hughenden deposit, B/xii/J/82b

²⁶⁷ *Hansard*, 1 May, 1877, vol.234, c.173-4.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 15 June 1877, vol.234, c.1894-95.

²⁶⁹ *DP*, 3 Aug. 1855.

This concept of brotherhood was also reflected in the Evangelical Alliance's concerns of the 1850s, for example when Francesco and Rosa Madiai were imprisoned for holding Protestant meetings in Florence.²⁷⁰

As well as his disapproval of slavery, he was concerned about the implications of the United States apparently heading towards civil war. The idea of brother fighting against brother caused him to comment on the Americans caring more about the ideology of the Union and possible loss of territory rather than Christian principles of unity.²⁷¹ This goal of unity was reflected in his efforts to establish worldwide Protestantism as both a counterweight and rival to Roman Catholicism. The goal had both a religious and an Orange implication. It is their combination that is the specific focus of this section.

In Conservative Protestant ideology, the actual concept of Empire had been mooted before Emancipation and subsequently expressed by Protestant Associations and the National Club in the 1840s and 1850s based on the language of the 1533 Acts of Appeal. It meant Protestant Empire and implied freedom from papal interference. Unity of Empire indicated a common Protestantism.²⁷² The so-called evangelical 'Second Reformation' had initially focussed on Ireland but by mid century, with a lack of success, and as the Irish Catholic and Protestant diaspora increased, missionary attention turned to other parts of the Empire.²⁷³ Orangeism, Johnston's chosen tool of evangelism and propagation, was honed to meet the missionary requirements of diasporic communities.

²⁷⁰ Wolffe, *Protestant Crusade*, p.267.

²⁷¹ *DP*, 23 Aug. 1862.

²⁷² Wolffe, 'Anti-Catholicism and the British Empire', p.46.

²⁷³ *Ibid*, p.45.

In practice, Orange emigrants would leave with a warrant, or would later request a warrant to set up a lodge where they settled. When there were sufficient warrants, a Grand Lodge was set up. Grand Lodges first appeared in England in 1808, Canada in 1830, Scotland in 1836, New South Wales in 1845, Victoria and New Zealand in 1867, the United States in 1870 and South Africa in 1905.²⁷⁴ Recent studies have highlighted the importance of the homeland in creating a robust and long-term group identity for Orange diasporic communities.²⁷⁵ Such robustness was shown by the deputation from the colonies that arrived for the Triennial Council and visited Londonderry in August 1876 and 1885 for the commemoration events. Accompanied by Johnston, the representatives were welcomed as if by right. They revered the walls and cathedral of Derry as part of a sacred history. They certainly referred to vital diasporic communities in Canada (with members numbering tens of thousands) and Australia which were well aware not only of the history of Derry but current events. One of the Canadian representatives stated that the name of John Guy Ferguson, Governor of the Apprentice Boys, was as well known in Ontario as it was in Derry. The name of Johnston was honoured for his achievements with regard to the Party Processions Act.²⁷⁶

While Johnston had been active in stimulating a wider Orange network since 1865, the original suggestion owed its origin to W. H. Tarriana, the Grand Secretary of the Grand Protestant Association of Loyal Orangemen of England who sought greater ties between the Orangemen of England, Ireland and Scotland in 1865.²⁷⁷

Johnston extended it to the colonies, proposing annual meetings with representative members. However, in 1866, following a Grand Conference with

²⁷⁴ D. Fitzpatrick, 'Exporting Brotherhood', p.278.

²⁷⁵ MacRaid, D. M., 'The Associationalism of the Orange Diaspora' and Jenkins, W., 'Views from the 'Hub of the Empire': Loyal Orange Lodges in early twentieth-century Toronto' in *The Orange Order in Canada*, ed. by D. A. Wilson and W. Kelly (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007).

²⁷⁶ LS, 15 Aug. 1876, 13 Aug. 1885.

²⁷⁷ McClelland, *William Johnston*, p.39.

colonial representation, a triennial meeting was regarded as most appropriate and the Imperial Council of Orangemen was established with the Earl of Enniskillen as Grand Master of Ireland as President, Honourable John H. Cameron, Grand Master of British North America as Vice President and William Johnston as secretary.²⁷⁸

The purpose of these councils was to 'take into consideration the state of Orangeism and Protestantism, with a view to devising means for the furtherance of the cause of Truth, and the extension of the Orange Society'.²⁷⁹ The furtherance of truth referred to the spread of evangelical Protestantism. That this was an object for Orangeism had been confirmed by Thomas Drew in 1852 when he stated that 'the Colonies are given us by Gracious Providence to enable us to propagate Protestantism'.²⁸⁰ Drew was representative of the thinking of the Belfast lodges – almost forty had expressed their veneration for him in the wake of his 1857 Orange church service on the Twelfth.²⁸¹ The prominence of evangelicalism was reflected in the resolutions of their Lambeg anti home rule meeting of 1874,

We recommend closer union and more harmonious action among Evangelical Churches in order that they may be better able to meet and defeat the machinations of Popery.²⁸²

This was one of four which pledged to spread Orangeism within the Empire to protect civil and religious liberties, to defeat home rule in every arena, and to support the Crown being Protestant. Evangelicalism was the creed of a key element within Orangeism. Its object was to carry the fight against Roman Catholicism, in both religious and political contexts, into the Empire.

²⁷⁸ Ibid, pp.39-40.

²⁷⁹ GOLI, Dublin, 6-8 Dec. 1865.

²⁸⁰ Fitzpatrick, 'Exporting Brotherhood', p.280.

²⁸¹ DP, 21 Aug. 1857.

²⁸² GOL Belfast programme of anti home rule meeting, resolution 3.

The importance of evangelicalism is reflected by Fitzpatrick's study of South Australia. He argues that the object of Orangeism in the homeland, as well as the empire, was to pursue civil and religious liberties through the medium of evangelical Protestantism. Brethren were expected to live according to a strict moral code, rigorously enforced, and a form of unity was to be achieved between evangelical churches.²⁸³ Fitzpatrick's conclusion to his survey of Orangeism in the diaspora was that its appeal was attributable to the character of social alliances and factional conflicts in South Australia rather than being a direct result of or reaction to Protestant or Catholic immigration from Ireland. Remarkably adaptable to local requirements, it proved itself a useful tool in 'ameliorating animosity between Protestant sects' and for 'reinforcing the existing marginalisation' of the Catholic minority.²⁸⁴ Religion was a vital aspect of the Orangeism exhibited. The religious component was more important than the political and this was demonstrated by the fact that a Roman Catholic, but otherwise sound Conservative candidate, would not receive the Orange vote while the evangelical candidate would.²⁸⁵ 'Religion supplied a viable basis for collective action in pursuit of social, economic and political advancement.'²⁸⁶ However, Orangeism did tend to hit the same problems as the Evangelical Alliance when it came to organisation on an international scale. It was moulded by local requirements.²⁸⁷ Fitzpatrick states that this was an indication of its democratic nature. It could also have been a reflection of evangelical individualism.

Donald MacRaild, in considering the Orange diaspora in the North of England, emphasises the importance of links with the homeland and highlights the

²⁸³ Fitzpatrick, 'Exporting Brotherhood', pp.287-88.

²⁸⁴ Ibid, pp.284-85, 298.

²⁸⁵ Ibid, p.294.

²⁸⁶ Ibid, p.299.

²⁸⁷ Ibid, p.279.

importance of newspapers in maintaining those links in the reporting of home issues and those of Orangeism across the Empire.²⁸⁸ Johnston was always scrupulous in keeping readers of the *Downshire Protestant* abreast of Orange initiatives within the Empire and the progress of Roman Catholicism worldwide. Br. Parkill, from the Canadian deputation of 1885, told the Apprentice Boys' meeting that he always had a copy of the *Sentinel* sent out to him so that he could follow the progress of events. He expressed Canadian sympathy for Johnston after his dismissal from his government post.²⁸⁹

MacRaild makes reference to two distinct types of Orange enclaves in England which owed their differences to their roots. While there were 348 lodges in England in 1870, half of these were in Liverpool. Here, the nature of Orangeism was different from the Irish/Scots-led lodges in the overlapping zones around the northern reaches of the Irish Sea. Basically, a significant proportion of Liverpool's Orangeism reflected a strong native reaction against the Catholic Irish immigrants.²⁹⁰ In the other areas, Orangeism was more attributable to diasporic Irish organisation, often with a connection to specific churches and political clubs. These organisations were removed from 'the mainstream Tory-Protestant viewpoint', and were bonded by an Ulster Protestant outlook on such issues as home rule. These were the type of Orange diaspora with which Johnston could more readily connect.

Both Fitzpatrick and MacRaild make passing reference to the importance of William Johnston. Fitzpatrick referred to the role of the Imperial Grand Orange

²⁸⁸ D. M. MacRaild, 'Networks, Communications and the Irish Protestant Diaspora in Northern England, c.1860-1914', *Immigrants & Minorities*, 23, no. 2 (2005), pp.312-313.

²⁸⁹ LS, 13 Aug. 1885.

²⁹⁰ MacRaild, 'Networks', p.319; F. Neal, *Sectarian Violence: The Liverpool Experience, 1819-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), pp.250-51.

Council, established in 1866, which was called on initially to support Johnston's leadership against that of the more circumspect Lord Enniskillen.²⁹¹ MacRaild highlights his importance to the diaspora in his frequent newspaper articles which kept the widespread fraternities abreast of current circumstances.²⁹²

Though there were Orange diasporic communities in many countries, nowhere were they more successful than in Canada. Though many emigrants went to America in the early nineteenth century, a much higher percentage went to Canada becoming, with Britain, the largest concentration of Orangemen outside Ireland.²⁹³ Here there was the same political/constitutional context with Canadian Orangemen valuing links with Britain and the Empire. Ontario was regarded as the loyal heartland with Toronto, its Belfast, at the centre. Here there were 930 Orange lodges in 1870 whereas in the United States in 1900 there were only 350. Orangeism contributed considerably to English Canada's sense of itself as Anglo-Saxon and Protestant. Ulster based Orangemen, including Johnston, visited Toronto and attended lodge meetings. Protestant clergymen from Ulster attended Orange rallies and spoke as guest speakers in local churches. The rhetoric of these notables was ably reinforced by local talent.²⁹⁴ Moreover, the Order occupied a privileged place in the civic order, its members regularly occupying the mayoralty and frequently sitting on the city council. The Twelfth of July was a public holiday in all but name. Crowds between fifteen and twenty thousand came to watch between two and five thousand marching participants. The impact of the

²⁹¹ Fitzpatrick, 'Exporting Brotherhood', p.279.

²⁹² MacRaild, 'Networks', p.330.

²⁹³ Ibid, p.316.

²⁹⁴ Jenkins, 'Hub of the Empire', pp.129,139,140.

parade extended its influence throughout the city.²⁹⁵ Here, 'the myths of Protestant struggles were sustained beyond the epicentre of Ireland'.²⁹⁶

The similarities between Toronto and Belfast went beyond the industrial and parading commonalities. The *Sentinel and Orange and Protestant Advocate*, a local newspaper established in 1875, linked Ulster and Anglo-Canadian Protestant interest by pointing out commonalities such as restrictions to commemoration experienced on both continents. It also kept abreast of the alleged geopolitical manoeuvrings of the Roman Catholic Church. The main internal issues were education, religion and language fought in remarkably similar vein to those in Ulster. There was continuing interest in Irish affairs to the extent that financial support was given for the fight at home. This concern went beyond support for the homeland, and home rule was seen in a wider context as a threat to the British Empire and Canada's role within it.²⁹⁷ However, close attention was paid to the struggle to preserve all aspects of commemoration in Derry. William Johnson, Grand Master of Ontario West, on a visit to Derry in 1876, said that Kingston always celebrated the Relief of Derry and the numbers of supporters were as numerous as those in Ulster.²⁹⁸ He added that there was also a 'Derry' in Canada. This was Kingston which had refused to surrender to the wishes of the Duke of Newcastle, guardian of the young Prince of Wales, who wanted no display of Orangeism in the state visit in 1861. At the time, Johnston had championed the rights of Canadian Orangeism when he challenged the 'outrageous behaviour' of the Duke of Newcastle in snubbing the Orange Order on an official visit. He said

²⁹⁵ Clarke, B. 'Religious riot as pastime: Orange Young Britons, parades and public life in Victorian Toronto' in *The Orange Order in Canada*, ed. by D. A. Wilson and W. Kelly, (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007), pp.110-11.

²⁹⁶ Jenkins, Views from 'the Hub of the Empire', p.141.

²⁹⁷ Ibid, pp.137-40.

²⁹⁸ LS, 15 Aug. 1876.

what had been done to Canada had been done to Ulster Orangemen as it was part of the Orange union.²⁹⁹

In 1869, in response to a request from Paisley, Canada, Johnston sent a cast that had been made of his head so that his likeness could be put on an Orange flag. Neil Jarman suggests it was not until 1876 that Johnston's image appeared in Ulster.³⁰⁰ His popularity in 1869 would have been particularly high following his brief imprisonment for breaking the law for leading an Orange procession in 1868 and his subsequent rise to parliamentary representative for Belfast. It shows how aware Orange Canadians were of current Orange issues.

He visited Canada in 1870 to attend the Triennial Council³⁰¹ and again in 1872. There he received a hero's welcome having recently been responsible for the repeal of the Party Processions Act. At this point, Johnston seriously considered emigration to Canada but as no immediate appointment was available to him to enable him to live comfortably, the matter came to nothing.³⁰² He went to Canada again in 1879 and 1891. On both occasions he was given a warm welcome. In 1879, the *Sentinel and Orange and Protestant Advocate* described a crowd of 5000 crowding Union Station, Toronto, to welcome him.³⁰³ Another paper described the celebration of 12 July, held a few days previously, as one of the largest and most successful ever held in Toronto, listing the Centre District, LOL, as the William Johnston.³⁰⁴ In 1891, the papers reported that royalty could not have had a greater reception. At the Triennial Council (1891), Johnston spoke of the representation of Orangemen from all over the world prepared to stand by the

²⁹⁹ *BNL*, 15 May 1861.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid*, 13 Jul. 1888; Jarman, *Material Conflicts*, p.68.

³⁰¹ MacRaild, 'Associationalism', p.30.

³⁰² McClelland, *William Johnston*, p.74.

³⁰³ *Sentinel and Orange and Protestant Advocate*, 17 Jul. 1879.

³⁰⁴ *The Evening Telegram, Toronto*, 12 Jul. 1879.

Protestant religion and the Orange Institution. He added that one section of Orange obligation that was most dear to him was that binding them to protect the integrity of the Empire.³⁰⁵ Such bonds were not superficial.

The warmth with which he regarded Canada and with which Protestant Canadians regarded him reinforces the impression of a strong link between both countries and a lively awareness of relevant issues. Johnston's readiness to consider moving there indicates how much at home he felt in the company of his Canadian confederates and also his frustration with the treatment of Orangemen in Ulster. The cult of personality had a resonance both in Canada and at home in Ulster. Johnston combined the attributes of evangelical Protestantism and Orangeism in the sixties and seventies when loyalist symbolism was developing rapidly and the marches were gaining more prominence. This reflected a desire to assert cultural identity in response to the threat of home rule. The symbolism reflected the combination of traditional heroes and contemporary popular evangelical leaders. Banners depicting Cooke, Drew and Johnston were becoming the norm.³⁰⁶

The Irish home rule issue became for such Canadians part of the wider struggle against Roman Catholicism. As the nineteenth century drew to a close, Irish Catholicism had been largely assimilated but French Canadian expansion was causing concern. It presented a serious demographic and religious threat to the Orange vision of Canada as the centre of the Protestant British Empire. At this period, Orange members in Ireland and Canada drew together in the face of perceived common threats like a Catholic French Canada and Catholic Nationalist Ireland.³⁰⁷ However, Gladys Ganiel, in her study of evangelicalism in the present

³⁰⁵ The *Daily Telegram, Vancouver, BC*, 15 Aug. 1891.

³⁰⁶ Jarman, *Material Conflicts*, p.68.

³⁰⁷ Jenkins, *Views from 'the Hub of the Empire'*, pp.138-42.

day, argues that this scenario did not last. Canada in the twentieth century, she maintains, did not develop the Calvinistic-inspired conception of covenant and chosen people that existed in Ulster. The numbers of Catholics and Protestants did not allow for domination by any particular group and therefore inspired a need for tolerance.³⁰⁸

This would suggest that for the development of such a covenantal ideology a particular format was necessary. This would include the appropriate circumstances for settler ideology, with its strong sense of anti-Catholicism and fear of being outnumbered and its need for dominance. The Calvinistic covenantal justification for action would also be necessary reinforced by evangelical conviction and the drive for action. Such a combination caused confrontation and hardened boundaries. This was the case in Ulster. In the nineteenth century, expansion in British North America, Australia and eventually New Zealand and South Africa, coincided with the revival of anti-Catholicism in Britain.³⁰⁹ Anti-Catholicism was close to the heart of evangelical identity and it moved along paths based on evangelical networks.³¹⁰ However, all anti-Catholicism was not evangelical in character and generally there was a distinction between religious and political anti-Catholicism.³¹¹ This was less the case in Ulster where the evangelical anti-Catholicism being exported via Orangeism was often both religious and political, mutually reinforcing characteristics. An aspiration shared by both evangelicalism and Orangeism was Protestant unity. This helped bind the two concepts together though it was not universally attained in either. There were migratory paths attributable to both evangelicalism and Orangeism. However, the former often spread along these paths as part of a formula constructed by

³⁰⁸ G Ganiel, *Evangelicalism and conflict*, pp.56-58.

³⁰⁹ Wolfe, 'Anti-Catholicism and the British Empire', p.44.

³¹⁰ Wolfe, 'Anti-Catholicism and Evangelical Identity', p.179.

³¹¹ *Ibid*, pp.186-7.

Orangeism in the form of militant evangelicalism. In areas of the Empire such as New Zealand, colonization showed only a limited success,³¹² the formula of combined religious and political action not having particular long-term relevance. It was most successful when the religio-political agenda of Orangeism was appropriate to local needs, as when there was a perceived threat to religious and political Protestant identity. In an area such as Canada with a Catholic/Protestant divide it took hold and prospered while the danger threatened. Effective contact with the homeland was an important contributory factor but the existence of parallel issues reinforced those links to provide a genuine unity of purpose and mutual support. That the ideology did not attain the level of entrenchment in the diaspora reflects the special circumstances experienced in the homeland including the religious dimension of covenantal Calvinism.

Conclusion

Johnston was a militant evangelical. That means that his evangelicalism was active and confrontational and his politics were determined by his religious outlook. His mindset was inflexible and premillennialist, but this was tempered by a sense of fairness and equity which reflected his sense of evangelical morality. His drive for activism was an evangelical quality and was reflected in his charitable works, in his promotion of conversionism and his propagation of Protestantism which he combined with missionary enterprise and evangelical fervour. His evangelicalism could not be separated from his covenantal Calvinism and Orange principles. Orangeism, stemming from settler ideology with its goal of protecting Protestantism, appeared to provide him with a framework for evangelical activities. His anti-Catholicism was an aspect of both Orangeism and evangelicalism –

³¹² MacRaild, 'Associationalism', pp.31-2.

strands which were mutually reinforcing. Similarly, his goal of unity was attributable to both – an aspiration rather than an achievement. Marching and bringing forth the symbols of Protestantism, including the open bible and the cross, was much more than an expression of popular culture, it had religious significance.

Evangelicalism often had a catalytic effect in that while it did not in itself alter in composition, it facilitated a reaction in the other elements. Consequently, evangelical conviction often heightened and exaggerated the reaction to political events. It also meant that religion was not affected by political agendas but the agendas became an extension of religious conviction. On occasions, however, religion actually interacted and altered in composition. This was the case in the Revival of 1859 as the nature of Presbyterianism altered in response to evangelical convictions. It could also be seen within Ulster Loyalism as similar qualities became mutually reinforcing producing a stronger more resilient end product. The perceived need for defence of the Protestant religion associated with settler ideology became imbued with an experiential covenantalism and evangelical conviction. For proponents of militant evangelicalism, Protestant defence was a religious goal, holding ground as important as conversionism. For them, the drive to evangelise and the right to evangelise merged. Consequently, the addition of the attribute of defence to the other characteristics of evangelicalism in Bebbington's model might well provide a working model for evangelicalism in Ulster Loyalism in the mid to late nineteenth century.

It was the interface between the two concepts of evangelicalism and Orangeism that produced hybrid goals in Johnston's own life, in the Order itself and progressively throughout the Empire. Fundamental to Orangeism was the desire to propagate the principles of the Reformation in religion and those of the 1688

Revolution in politics; central to evangelicalism was the drive to spread the Gospel and reach the 'unsaved'. Common to both was the desire for activism and promotion of Protestant unity to achieve their goals. Emerging from both was a hybrid duality, to evangelise and to protect; the latter invested with political implications. Both goals were injected with an evangelical fervour that sharpened the implicit anti-Catholicism and took the desire for activism and pan Protestantism to a new level. This duality was stamped on the culture of the day, and defined the emerging identity of Ulster Protestantism.

CHAPTER TWO

Londonderry: Evangelicalism, Politics and Commemoration

The purpose of this chapter is to focus on evangelicalism in Londonderry.

Londonderry was second in prominence to Belfast in the north and, like it, had been affected by economic dislocation and had experienced a significant rise in its Catholic population. These factors contributed to sectarian unrest. Its location on the edge of the seventeenth century Ulster plantation, at some distance from the main concentration of Protestant settlers in the east was also significant. This contributed to a sense of vulnerability for Protestants. Moreover, the existence of the Protestant 'myth' of the siege of Londonderry, which suggested divine favour for the city and its inhabitants, contributed greatly to Protestant cultural identity both within the city and throughout Ulster, and made it a location worthy of scrutiny.

In this chapter an attempt is made to establish the character of evangelicalism in the city and how viable it was as a uniting force within the Protestant community. Unifying practices such as voluntarism and membership of the Evangelical Alliance are considered in relation to the more divisive practices of politics and commemoration. Commemoration is significant because much of the unrest in the city in the nineteenth century was centred round the Apprentice Boys' anniversary parades and as Londonderry was the focus of many of Johnston's battles in his crusade to repeal the Party Processions Act.¹ Concentrating on the

¹ See Chapter 1, p.32.

denominations most involved with the practice of and debates over commemoration, the Anglican and Presbyterian, an attempt will be made to establish whether evangelicals formed a separate identifiable group within Protestantism or whether evangelicalism lived up to its fissiparous nature. If the latter, the questions addressed are whether or not an overarching evangelical identity had any practical significance and whether the concept of Protestant unity was an achievable reality. How evangelicalism manifested itself within different worldviews, including politics and eschatology within Presbyterianism, is therefore important as are reactions to the key issues of the 1859 Revival, disestablishment and home rule and the ideology of the Evangelical Alliance. To examine the breadth of the concept, attention is given to certain individuals within Anglicanism during the period 1859-1886. This is set against a background of divided Protestantism and politicised Catholicism.

Before assembling the evidence, it is necessary to define certain terms and how they will be used in the chapter. Worldview, as explained in the introduction, is a term used by Ninian Smart to refer to the combination of key attributes that create a particular outlook on life.² Although the concept is considered in more depth in later chapters, the pattern referred to in the introduction is used as a template to highlight differences within Presbyterianism, the denomination most divided by the issue of commemoration. The term 'Liberal Protestantism' (with capitals) is used to describe a political orientation that favours social progress by reform and by the changing of laws rather than by revolution. After 1865, it became permeated by Gladstone's agenda for the pacification of Ireland including plans for the Church of Ireland. In theological terms, 'liberal' denotes a willingness to interpret Scripture

² See Introduction, pp.8-10.

without the notion of inerrancy or restrictions of Church dogma. 'Conservative Protestantism' refers to a political orientation that favours the preservation of the existing structures of society and opposition to radical change. When 'conservative' appears in lower case, it refers to Protestantism that had a very strong Scriptural base and an aversion to ritualism.

Overview 1798 - 1886

'Derry ... escaped the worst of the ravages of the 1789 rebellion'.³ Though the Catholic population was numerous, it did not pose a political threat to constitutional stability, disassociating itself from the actions of the United Irishmen.⁴ The Catholic bishop, Charles O'Donnell, encouraged loyalty to the institutions of government and respect for other Christian religions. Good relations with the Protestant communities were reflected by the financial support provided for Catholic places of worship and O'Donnell, in a pastoral letter issued on 1 July 1798, emphasised the benefits of freedom of religion under George III, the establishment of Maynooth and the fact that Catholics could now hold military and civil office.⁵ However, in the county there were sectarian clashes between the Orange Order and Ribbonism, arguably as much a symptom as cause of hostilities between Catholics and Protestants.⁶ By 1808 there were 3,500 Catholics in Derry out of a population of 10,000. This was becoming an issue of concern for Protestants, with the question of political power becoming prevalent in the early

³ Oliver Rafferty, 'Catholic and Protestant Relations in Derry in the Episcopacy of Charles O'Donnell, 1798-1823', in *Derry and Londonderry: history and society: interdisciplinary essays on the history of an Irish county*, ed. Gerard O'Brien, series ed. William Nolan (Dublin: Geography Publications, 1999), p.449.

⁴ Ibid, p.451.

⁵ Ibid, pp.449-51.

⁶ Ibid, p.454.

years of the nineteenth century. At this point, the focus appeared to be changing from Catholic/ Presbyterian common interest to that of Presbyterian/Anglican.⁷

From 1807, Derry began to experience political unrest linked to the O'Connellite campaign for emancipation. While O'Donnell followed Rome's guidance on quiet acceptance, Father Cornelius Mullan led Catholic agitation for this political goal challenging both the church and state. He was suspended by the church authorities and gaoled for a month by the civil authorities in 1813. However, the effects of the O'Connellite movement did not reach full force in Derry until the episcopacy of Dr. Peter McLaughlin, appointed 1824.⁸

Changes in attitude to the siege commemorations stem from August 1811 when seven members of the yeomanry left the ranks in protest at the wearing of orange lilies.⁹ The orange symbolism was beginning to assume sectarian connotations. In 1813, when McMullan was sentenced, the recorder, who was commander of the yeomanry, referred to the recent removal of orange lilies from the uniforms of the participants in the commemorations 'out of respect to the feelings of our Roman Catholic brethren'.¹⁰ In 1814, the first Apprentice Boys' Club was formed and at the closing of the gates ceremony, its leader, James Gregg, condemned the 'idea of attributing party notions to our rejoicings in commemoration of that eventful day, and censured those factious men who first led the unwary to take offence at proceedings which they had been accustomed to look on with complaisance, and

⁷ Ibid, pp.452, 455.

⁸ Ibid, pp.455-57.

⁹ T. G. Fraser, 'The siege, its history and legacy, 1688-1889' in *Derry and Londonderry: history and society: interdisciplinary essays on the history of an Irish county*, ed, Gerard O'Brien, series ed. William Nolan (Dublin: Geography Publications, 1999) p.391.

¹⁰ Ibid.

even to join in'.¹¹ Walker's Pillar was built between 1826 and 1828 highlighting the importance of the siege to the city.¹² At the subsequent dinner in celebration of the Relief of the city, a preview of later Liberalism was provided by George Robert Dawson (MP from 1815 – 1830), to whom Robert Peel was friend and mentor. Dawson defected from his ultra-Protestant stance suggesting that James' supporters were also loyal men and worthy of respect.¹³

Other clubs appeared in the 1820s and 1830s, though the 1814 club appears to have gone into abeyance.¹⁴ In 1824 the military authorities forbade participation by the yeomanry in the commemorations. By 1831, Roman Catholics formed 58% of the population, overwhelmingly from Donegal and concentrated in the Bogside, the Catholic area outside the city walls.¹⁵ In 1832, in response to Catholic protests, public parades were banned for five years.¹⁶ The 1840s saw the advance of other less transitory clubs.¹⁷ These clubs appeared to be imbued with 'Victorian respectability', indicating an improved moral climate that included teetotalism¹⁸ and suggested evangelical influence.

Presbyterian influence increased notably in 1848 with the Liberal James McKnight taking over the *Londonderry Standard*. He was a fierce critic of the Established Church and landlordism and was a leading activist in the tenants' rights agitation and the driving force behind attempts to establish 'a distinct Presbyterian structure

¹¹ Ibid, pp.391-2.

¹² McBride, 'The Siege', p.51.

¹³ A. Blackstock, *Loyalism in Ireland, 1789-1829* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2007), p.223.

¹⁴ See Chapter 4, pp.237-39.

¹⁵ Fraser, 'The Siege', p.391.

¹⁶ Ibid, p.392.

¹⁷ See Chapter 4, pp.237-40.

¹⁸ Mark McGovern, 'We have a strong city': politicised Protestantism, evangelicalism and the siege myth in early nineteenth-century Derry', in *The Sieges of Derry*, ed. William Kelly (Dublin: Fourcourts, 2001) p.114.

in Derry.¹⁹ Liberal politics had emerged as a redoubtable force in the 1850s and split the Protestant vote. The implications became clear at the 1860 by-election where the Conservative candidate William McCormack defeated the Liberal, Samuel McCurdy Greer.²⁰ In 1865, Greer again lost but by a small margin.²¹ The Catholic vote now had great significance. Magee College, a Presbyterian theological college, opened in 1865 and became a centre for Liberal politics.²²

Liberalism and Presbyterianism were not by any means synonymous, however. Many working-class Presbyterians were Conservative and, in fact, Presbyterians constituted the majority of the membership of the Apprentice Boys clubs. These followed the teachings of Rev. Henry Cooke who found common cause with Low Church Anglicans. There was however still a Liberal element in the clubs.²³

Conservatism was at this point under pressure in Londonderry. Lord John Claud Hamilton, the MP for Londonderry, was said to have taken control of the Apprentice Boys in the mid 1860s using the organisation as a vehicle for Conservatism. By 1868, when he lost the seat to the Liberal Sergeant Dowse, the organisation was said to represent the interests of the Tories and the Church exclusively.²⁴ An alliance was formed between the Liberal Presbyterians and Catholics.

The political situation within the city combined with the strength of Fenianism in outlying areas contributed to the revival of the Orange Order. There was a

¹⁹ Mc Govern, 'We have a strong city', p.119.

²⁰ *BNL*, 2 Apr. 1860.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 17 Jul. 1865.

²² McBride, *Siege of Derry*, p.64.

²³ See Chapter 4, pp.242-3.

²⁴ *House of Commons Report of Inquiry, 1869, into riots and disturbances in Londonderry*, (1870) min.2177.

skirmish between Orangemen and Roman Catholics on 12 July 1867 at Muff Glen.²⁵ John Guy Ferguson became governor of the Apprentice Boys clubs and introduced a hard-line attitude, doubtless in response to current events. An attempt by some members of the Apprentice Boys to break up a pre-election Liberal meeting in 1868 ended in violence. In that year, Catholics paraded around the city with a Fenian flag and the Conservative Town Council banned a Liberal celebration march through the city walls. There were skirmishes, resulting in two deaths, between rival parades welcoming Prince Arthur to the city in 1869. A House of Commons inquiry, instituted because of the riots, suggested the banning of parades but this was not enforced immediately.

The annual parades took place on 12 August, the Relief of Londonderry, and 18 December, the Shutting of the Gates. Each parade consisted of two circuits of the walls.²⁶ When the December parade appeared to be going ahead, a Catholic working-men's organisation was formed and threatened violence. The Liberal candidate, Sergeant Dowse, fought the by-election in 1870 and won against the Conservative Aaron Baxter. There were incidents but these appear to have been scuffles rather than riots.²⁷ In 1872, as discussed in Chapter One, the Party Processions Act was repealed due in part to the exertions of William Johnston.²⁸

The Presbyterian and Catholic alliance, under pressure from 1872, collapsed in the elections of 1885-6.²⁹ As the *Londonderry Standard* shows, Presbyterian Liberalism maintained its focus on the land issue well into the 1880s³⁰ but the

²⁵ *Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser*, 16 July 1867.

²⁶ See Chapter 5, Appendix 4.

²⁷ *BNL*, 18 Feb. 1867.

²⁸ See Chapter 1, p.74-5.

²⁹ McBride, *The Siege of Derry*, p.66.

³⁰ G. Peatling, 'Whatever happened to Presbyterian radicalism?', pp.155-165.

gradual shift of allegiance of the Catholic population to the home rule party split the Liberal vote. McBride argues that the polarisation of Ulster politics began in 1883 in response to 'the invasion of Ulster' by the home rule movement.³¹ This is confirmed by a report of the Apprentice Boys' meeting in 1884 which suggested that some prominent Liberals were deeply concerned by the direction the Liberal Party was taking and there might be some sort of rapprochement with the Conservatives.³²

As nationalism took hold in the Roman Catholic population, there were sectarian disturbances not only after siege parades but also after nationalist protest marches and even those of the Salvation Army. In 1882, a branch of the National League emerged in the city and in 1883 the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Charles Dawson, was invited by Catholic representatives to speak at the Town Hall. The building was seized by Apprentice Boys, supported by members of the clergy and aristocracy, and the meeting had to be relocated. The 1884 Reform Act resulted in an equal number of Protestant and Catholic voters. As the dangers of again splitting the Protestant vote became clear, Joseph Mulholland, the Liberal candidate, withdrew and Lewis, the Conservative candidate, gained a narrow victory. 1885-1886 saw the political integration of Tories and Liberal Unionists. The city was now polarised politically and religiously and sectarianism had established itself.³³

According to Frank Wright the political geography of Ulster generally was determined by 'deterrence relationships', the circular sectarian relationship

³¹ McBride, *Siege of Derry*, p.66.

³² LS, 20 Dec. 1884; See Chapter 5, pp.342-3.

³³ McBride, *Siege of Derry*, pp.66-67.

between Protestant and Catholic.³⁴ Both Stewart's and Miller's work lends weight to this theory and Walker talks of the binary opposition of Protestant and Catholic proving to be the most fundamental factor in Ulster politics.³⁵ Border areas were particularly susceptible to sectarianism and Derry was on the border of Donegal, a county with a high Catholic majority. This was important to the dynamic of the city. Although this chapter focuses particularly on the significance of evangelical religion in identity formation, a brief look at Roman Catholicism in the city should help to clarify whether religion was little more than an ethnic marker for both sides of this particular conflict, as concluded by Catherine Hirst for the 1857 riots in Belfast.³⁶

The Rise of Roman Catholicism

In 1789, the Catholic Bishop, Dr. MacDevitt, and some of his priests had joined in the commemorative anniversary of the centenary of the Relief of Derry, to celebrate the acquisition of civil and religious liberties.³⁷ Two generations later, however, following emancipation in 1829, the political situation had changed dramatically. Father Edward Maginn was a significant figure in this period. He had come to prominence as a curate in the Derry Discussion of 1828 when six Roman Catholic clergy, responding to a challenge from the Reformation Society, met publicly with six clergy of the Church of Ireland to speak on doctrinal and scriptural matters. He was an ardent emancipationist and an orthodox Repealer. Orthodox meant that while demanding the restoration of the Irish parliament, he

³⁴ F. Wright, *Two Lands on One Soil*, pp.2-8.

³⁵ A.T.Q. Stewart, *The Narrow Ground*, D. Miller, *Queen's Rebels*, B. Walker, *Ulster Politics: the Formative Years, 1868-86* (Belfast: UHF and IIS, 1989).

³⁶ C. Hirst, *Religion, Politics and Violence*, p.189.

³⁷ McBride, *Siege of Derry*, p.41.

was not a republican, and had little sympathy with the Young Ireland movement. Further, while he approved of constitutional agitation to remove a government, he was not in favour of attempting the violent overthrow of the state. He supported the Vatican's stance of upholding the existing order.³⁸

Maginn was influential throughout his career, from his early appointment as curate of Moville (1825), and later as parish priest of Desertegney and Fahan (1829-1846). He was active throughout the worst of the famine years (1847-49) and was particularly embittered about the lack of British support for the victims. He believed the Union had failed Ireland. Maginn was a prolific contributor to the local press writing initially in the *Londonderry Chronicle* and afterwards in the *Londonderry Journal*, often under a pseudonym.³⁹ He was a great admirer of Daniel O'Connell and was active in disseminating his political views. He was also strongly opposed to the observance of commemoration, writing to the Corporation in 1848, in his role as titular Bishop of Orthosa and Coadjutor of Derry (1846-1849), appealing to have the Relief of Derry parade stopped. When this was unsuccessful, he organised a counter-march by Catholics through the walled city on 18 December.⁴⁰ Like Johnston, he was very active in the field of religio-politics.

Both the physical presence and the confidence of Roman Catholicism in Londonderry changed significantly with Maginn's elevation to Coadjutor. This was during the episcopate of John MacLaughlin who suffered from ill health. During his first year, six new schools were opened, and 1100 children were confirmed. The Society of the Living Rosary, Sunday Schools, and parochial circulating libraries

³⁸ J. A. Coulter, 'The Political Theory of Dr. Edward Maginn, Bishop of Derry', *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, 981962), pp.104-113.

³⁹ Thomas D'Arcy McGee, *A Life of Rt. Rev. Edward Maginn* (New York: P. O'Shea, 1857), p.44.

⁴⁰ S. McLaughlin 'The development of the Catholic Church in Derry under the leadership of Bishop Francis Kelly (1849-88): a study of stewardship' in *History of the Diocese of Derry from Earliest Times*, ed. by H. A. Jefferies, C. Devlin, (Dublin: Four Courts, 2000), p.227.

were established in every parish. Sisters of Charity and the Christian Brothers were introduced and the building adjacent to St. Columb's Cathedral was purchased for a seminary.⁴¹ Dr. Francis Kelly took over as coadjutor in 1849 after Maginn's death. He continued the physical development of the Church in Derry. The foundation stone for a new cathedral was laid in 1851 and the building completed, apart from a tower, in 1873. This was during the period referred to as the 'devotional revolution' whereby religious practices were dramatically transformed and ties were tightened with Rome. Across Ireland, with the depletions of the famine and emigration, the effectiveness of the clergy was increased. This, combined with the religious leadership of Paul Cullen, facilitated the move away from folk religion to stricter church attendance. This rose from thirty-three percent in pre-famine Ireland to ninety percent fifty years later. Larkin argued that this was part of the creation of a new Irish identity in which Roman Catholicism became the central strand.⁴²

In Londonderry, the extent of change was very visible with twenty-two new churches built across the diocese during Kelly's episcopate (1849-88). The Christian Brothers opened a school in 1852. St. Columb's College was founded in 1879 providing secondary and intermediate education which would prepare boys for Maynooth College. Catholic illiteracy more than halved between 1861 and 1891. Kelly concentrated on developing the effectiveness and physical presence of the Catholic Church but kept a low profile in political matters. Taking a line more representative of Roman Catholic policy than Maginn had, he discouraged

⁴¹ McGee, *Edward Maginn*, p.86.

⁴² E. Larkin, 'The Devotional Revolution in Ireland 1850 - 1875', *American Historical Review*, 77, no. 3 (1972), pp.625-652.

Catholic counter-marches in Derry and his pastoral letter in 1873 regretted the fact that Roman Catholics had led processions and demonstrations.⁴³

Thus in the period between Emancipation (1829) and the Ulster Revival (1859), Protestants in Londonderry were faced with an increasingly visible, resurgent Catholicism that was devout and decidedly politically aware, though after Maginn, it tended to look to the laity for political leadership. This was a major challenge to the existing political order and it is perfectly possible that this acted as a spur for proponents of the status quo (Protestant hegemony) to cultivate evangelicalism as a counter-balance, facing Roman Catholic activism with Protestant activism in both religion and politics. Evangelicalism tended to thrive on the Protestant and Roman Catholic divide, 'giving enhanced ideological legitimacy and vigour to the polarization'.⁴⁴ Moreover, a Catholicism that was staunch and devout would have provided a greater challenge than the more nominal Catholicism associated with settler ideology. The increasing prominence and importance of religious factors is evident at this juncture. For committed evangelicals who shared Johnston's worldview, the threat presented by the 'devotional revolution' would have been regarded as more sinister than a nominal Catholic presence, however large. This underlines the importance of religion which clearly had a greater significance than merely providing an ethnic marker.

Rise of Evangelicalism

The late eighteenth-century evangelical revival in Britain and Ireland produced a 'passion for evangelism' which was also directed into a drive for social and moral

⁴³ *History of Derry Diocese*, ed. by Jefferies, p.237.

⁴⁴ J. Wolfe, *Evangelicals, Women and Community*, p.30.

reform. This involved all Protestant denominations and resulted in the establishment of numerous voluntary religious agencies.⁴⁵ Voluntary groups are movements or organisations instituted by groups of Christians or Christian individuals rather than churches.⁴⁶ By the end of the 1820s, many societies were established to recruit, manage funds and encourage public interest in missionary enterprise. Ireland was a chief target for such missionary zeal.⁴⁷ Evangelical charitable and proselytising agencies began to appear in Londonderry from the late eighteenth century and by the 1830s they were well represented in the city.

The Association for Discountenancing Vice, the Hibernian Society, and the Church Missionary Society were among those represented.⁴⁸ The Londonderry City Mission, with its emphasis on bringing the gospel to the working classes, opened in 1830. The Sunday School movement had been active since the 1780s and by the mid-1830s there were fourteen Episcopalian, four Presbyterian, one Seceder, one Independent and one Methodist Sunday School in the city.⁴⁹

Another organisation active in Londonderry in the early nineteenth century was the Londonderry Auxiliary to the Irish Society for Promoting the Education of the Native Irish through the Medium of their own Language.⁵⁰ Aside from the various branches of national societies, Londonderry had its own initiatives. Gwyn's Charitable Institute, which opened in 1833, was a striking example. It was an orphanage and could cater for seventy orphan boys at a time. It fed, clothed and educated them until they were fifteen and then apprenticed them to trades. The

⁴⁵ D. Hempton and M. Hill, *Evangelical Protestantism in Ulster*, p.47.

⁴⁶ R. Rouse, S. C. Neil, *A History of the Ecumenical Movement 1517-1948* (London: 1967), p.309.

⁴⁷ Hempton and Hill, *Evangelical Protestantism in Ulster*, p.47.

⁴⁸ M. McGovern, 'The siege myth: the siege of Derry in Ulster Protestant political culture 1689-1939' (PhD, Liverpool, 1994), p.161.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p.162.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p.161.

charity required twenty-one trustees consisting of the Bishop of Derry, two Presbyterian clergymen and eighteen merchants of the city. The cross-denominational committee reflected evangelical good practice which supported such denominational cooperation.⁵¹

Because of the sensitive relationship with the Roman Catholic community in Derry, the thriving missionary activities tended by default, because of Roman Catholic sensitivity to proselytising in the city, to be focussed on nominal co-religionists rather than Roman Catholics. This trend was commented upon in 1838 by Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna when she visited Londonderry. The well-known evangelical, author of *The Siege of Derry: a tale of the Revolution in 1688* and member of the Reformation Society was prompted to visit as a result of her connection with the Irish Society for Promoting the Education of the Native Irish through the Medium of their own Language.⁵² Referring to the progress of the Second Reformation in Londonderry, she commented that

a good man, a scripture reader, had been telling me of his work among the poor people here, but I found that it was to nominal Protestants, not Romanists, he took his message. The latter he seemed to regard as unapproachable; and that any attempt at instructing them must necessarily fail. To say the truth, there is too much of that impression discernible even among the higher classes in the extreme North; the national character of the aborigines is often held in great contempt, and an idea is prevalent that nothing can be done with them in the way of reclamation.⁵³

This was, of course the view of one individual, but there is similar evidence from the eleventh annual report of the Presbyterian City Mission (1865). Here it was noted that missionaries only covered the work not done by other ministries or

⁵¹ Gwyn's *Charitable Institute, Derry – Collection List*, Harbour Museum, Londonderry.

⁵² McGovern, 'Siege Myth', p.193.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p.194; LS, 13 Oct. 1838.

churches – meaning that they were not in competition. An account was given of a visit by a missionary to a family which had two Roman Catholic lodgers. It was recorded that the Roman Catholics chose to remain while the scripture was read and had knelt while the others prayed and had expressed themselves as being grateful. It was clear that the lodgers had not been specifically targeted by the missionary and the point was being made that, as far as they were concerned, the missionary was not proselytising.⁵⁴ So it seems very possible that proselytising activities were confined to the Protestant unchurched to avoid skirmishes. This would be in line with the trend that appears to have been set in the United Kingdom generally in the run up to Emancipation when skirmishes resulted from such proselytizing activities.⁵⁵

Thus, by the first half of the nineteenth-century, evangelicalism had established itself as a significant force in the city but the usual growth of conversionist proselytising was directed inwards. This was to an extent determined by the religio-political peculiarities within the city but it is also a reflection of the evangelicalism of the traditional Presbyterians who tended to concentrate on the reformation of church life and advocate return to the Presbyterian theological tradition, turning inwards.⁵⁶ The *Londonderry Standard*, for example, rejected the call for evangelical and political unity from Rev. Richard Babington in 1868, challenging the view that Anglicans and Presbyterians were ever close allies, historically or otherwise.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ *Londonderry Presbyterian City Mission, 11th annual report for 1865*, Londonderry Standard Office, 1866.

⁵⁵ D. Bowen, *The Protestant Crusade in Ireland, 1800-70: A Study of Protestant-Catholic Relations Between the Act of Union and Disestablishment* (Montreal: McGill Queens, 1978), pp.83-123, J. Wolfe, *The Protestant Crusade*, pp.29-64.

⁵⁶ A. R. Holmes, *The Shaping of Ulster Presbyterian Belief and Practice, 1770-1840* (Oxford: OUP, 2006), p.310.

⁵⁷ *Londonderry Standard*, 19 Dec. 1868.

The presence of these societies confirms the presence of evangelicalism, the timing of their establishment suggesting a defensive response to the prospect of Emancipation. Thus a religious system and a religious movement had become established in Londonderry, Roman Catholicism and evangelicalism. Both were vital and, in their more militant forms, locked in opposing ideologies. Aside from the relatively small Methodist congregation⁵⁸ which at this period was by definition evangelical, this movement was amorphous in the Protestant community which was divided by denomination and worldview.

In the mid 1860s, Protestant division became exacerbated by the growing significance of political views. The main divisions could be illustrated by, though obviously not confined to, the varying responses to commemoration. Those who were committed to the practice, such as the Apprentice Boys, composed of Anglicans and working-class Presbyterians, tended to regard themselves as evangelical and conservative in theology and politics and shared a premillennialist worldview. Liberal Presbyterians, who also regarded themselves as evangelical, were generally middle class, conservative in theology, but in favour of Gladstone's reforms. They opposed commemoration because they felt it was beginning to represent Conservatism from the mid 1860s and because it alienated Roman Catholics, of whom they were tolerant, to a point, and with whom they shared, for a time, a Liberal political alliance. There was a split within Presbyterianism where two evangelical bodies had quite different worldviews. However, within Anglicanism there were also divisions with High Church Conservatives and Low Church hard-line evangelicals. Commemoration was a subject which brought

⁵⁸ McGovern, 'Siege Myth', 161.

elements of the city into alliance and caused divisions not only between religions but within denominations of Protestantism. To gain a more detailed view of the evangelical ethos within the city and the reality of Protestant unity within Protestantism, important figures within the Anglican community are considered within their milieu, and differing outlooks within evangelical Presbyterianism are examined. Both denominations are considered in relation to key events between 1859 and 1885.

Important figures and aspects of Londonderry Protestantism

The Anglican see of Londonderry was one of the wealthiest in Ireland. In the period 1859 – 1885, there were two consecutive bishops, William Higgin (1853-67) and William Alexander (1867-96). Both played a part in the general evangelical ethos in the city and their differences indicate the complexity of the evangelical culture. They were related by their position in the Church of Ireland to the commemorative culture in the city. The Church's presence in Londonderry was symbolised by the Cathedral of Saint Columb's. A powerful symbol, it represented more than 40% of the Protestant population in Derry. It was a branch of government and was closely associated with social and political order in the region. Built in 1633, it was the first cathedral in the United Kingdom to be erected after the Reformation and still stands today, an imposing structure in 'Planter's Gothic'. It was known as the '*siege Cathedral*' and had been used by the forefathers of the Anglican and Presbyterian community during 1688-9 when under siege by the armies of James II as a place of shelter and communal prayer as well as a military base when cannons were fired from its roof. In the nineteenth century, it had become the main venue for the siege anniversary services that

form the centre of this study. Originally, the cathedral could accommodate around 1,000 people. However, in 1861 the interior was remodelled and the galleries were removed. This increased the accommodation to 1300.⁵⁹ The ethos of the cathedral, in the period under review (1859-86), was Low Church but both bishops challenged the status quo, Higgin by his political outlook and Alexander by his High Churchism.⁶⁰

The Free Episcopalian Church (free because the congregation did not have to pay for the privilege of using the pews) was used for the anniversary service when the cathedral was being renovated in 1861-62. Built in 1830 by the bishop at the time, William Knox, it was intended for the benefit of the working classes. It was situated in Great James' Street and could accommodate 750 people and was known as the evangelical Church. Here, the impression is of more hard-line evangelicalism. This was evident in its opposition to any hint of ritual in the cathedral.⁶¹ The Chapel of Ease was a much smaller church, accommodating 300,⁶² that had been associated with the earliest English settlements, used by Presbyterians during the siege, and rebuilt in 1872. The new building was designed by John Guy Ferguson, Governor of the Apprentice Boys, consecrated by William Alexander and became known as St. Augustine's. A commemorative church service was held there while the cathedral was being altered for the new chancel in August 1886.⁶³

⁵⁹ LS, 20 Dec. 1870.

⁶⁰ Eleanor Alexander, *Primate Alexander: Archbishop of Armagh* (London: Edward Arnold, 1913), p. 77.

⁶¹ See pp. 132-3.

⁶² John Hempton, *The Siege and History of Londonderry* (Londonderry, Dublin, London: 1861), p. 456.

⁶³ BNL, 13 Aug. 1886.

Higgin was regarded as Liberal in politics and evangelical in theology. He was a strong supporter of national education when most Church of Ireland clergy supported scriptural education. This combined with his political preference did not win him the confidence of the clergy or the laity initially, Londonderry Anglicans being associated with Low Church, Conservative leanings. A redeeming quality from their point of view, however, was that despite his Liberal convictions, he was a staunch supporter of church establishment.⁶⁴ Higgin was elevated to the position of Bishop of Limerick in 1845 because of his great activism in helping the famine victims of the diocese in his role as dean.⁶⁵ Four years later he was translated to the see of Derry.

There were initial objections to Higgin's appointment to Derry. These were based on the fact that he was an Englishman. Lucrative Irish church appointments going to Englishmen when there were well qualified Irishmen available for promotion was something that was frowned upon but nonetheless common. Also, it was believed that, because he was English, he would not be able to empathise with his Irish congregations and thus would be unable to serve their needs. A further point of contention was his position as commissioner of national education. This put him in opposition to his clergy who favoured the Church Education Society (scriptural education).⁶⁶ However, despite local objections, Higgin was appointed.

Higgin's appointment registered a sea-change in the running of the united diocese of Derry and Raphoe. He was an energetic evangelical activist who was determined to raise the standard of ministry and address both the spiritual and

⁶⁴ Rev. J. B. Leslie, *Clergy of Derry and Raphoe: Part 2* (Ulster Historical Foundation, 1999), pp.21-22.

⁶⁵ J. C. D Orr, *Servants of Christ: A short history of the bishops of Derry since the Reformation, 1605-1995* (Dublin: A.P.C.K. Church of Ireland House, 1997), p.86.

⁶⁶ LS, 4 Nov. 1873; J. Orr, *Servants of Christ*, p.87.

practical needs of those under his care. Where there were deficiencies in his churches, for example where there were no baptismal fonts, he made them good. Where Holy Communion services or evening services were infrequent, he made sure that the number of services was raised to an acceptable level. His activism was further demonstrated by the building of seventeen churches and the enlarging of twenty-seven during his episcopate. He oversaw the restoration of St. Columb's between 1861-2. Such activism was typical of the 'diocesan revival' which was underway in England as a result of economic dislocation and significant population movement. This revival resulted in an effective infrastructure binding the parochial clergy more tightly to the institution.⁶⁷ Rapid industrialisation between 1859 and 1870 further increased the population in Londonderry from 20,000 to 26,000 and exposed the inadequacies of the churches. The 1859 Revival which brought many nominal Protestants back to the church was a contributory factor.⁶⁸

In the years before disestablishment, Higgin was determined to show the church in the best light possible and expected the highest standard of conduct from his clergy. To that end, he spent a considerable amount of his personal funds in having the rector of Culdaff removed from his position. The rector had a dubious past and had appeared to have obtained the position at Culdaff by an act of simony. The bishop was resolute in his efforts for his removal and finally managed to have him ejected from his position. During that period, he himself attracted criticism for nepotism and favouritism, finding lucrative positions for his relatives.

⁶⁷ A. Burns, *The Diocesan Revival in the Church of England c. 1800 - 1870* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 260.

⁶⁸ A. R. Scott, *The Ulster Revival of 1859* (Ballymena: Mid Antrim Historical Group, 1994), p.92.

Pamphlets were published both attacking and defending the bishop's use of patronage.⁶⁹ But it was his Liberal outlook that caused particular tension.

He was not an advocate for the popular side of commemoration, preferring observance confined to a church service. He had a dispute with the Apprentice Boys in 1860 about allowing the flag to be raised from the east window of the cathedral and the bells rung for the Relief of Derry. This was common practice on anniversary dates but the Party Emblems Act (1860) was going through parliament at the time and Higgin supported its passage in the House of Lords. The Apprentice Boys took over the bell tower, raised the flag and refused entry to the cathedral curates. The police refused to take action, despite the bishop's demands, because the bill was not yet law.⁷⁰ Higgin's political outlook may have caused a certain ambivalence in his congregation's attitude to him, however, they could not fault his evangelical activism. This proved a significant contrast with earlier episcopates but provided a link to his successor.

William Alexander was Bishop from 1868 until 1896 when he became Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland. He was the last bishop of Derry to sit in the House of Lords before disestablishment of the Church of Ireland. Of an eminent Derry family, he was educated at Oxford and wrote significant theological works such as *Primary Convictions* (1893) and gave the Bampton Lectures in 1876. An eloquent preacher, he was also a poet having his works collected in *St. Augustine's Holiday and other poems* (1886). He was married to Cecil Frances, the celebrated poet and hymn writer.

⁶⁹ Orr, *Servants of Christ*, p.88.

⁷⁰ LS, 17 Aug. 1860; See Chapter 4, pp.264-5.

Unlike Higgin, he was welcomed not only because he was an Irishman but because he was born in Derry. There was less enthusiasm for his High Church views although he was not a ritualist. In fact, he was a particularly interesting character with a range of qualities that reflected evangelicalism as well as High Churchism. He described his own religious views as 'following the temperate track marked out by Scripture and by our reformed church between sacerdotalism and plymouthism'.⁷¹ His daughter Eleanor described him as being more attracted to the Church of England than the Church of Ireland 'for his struggle of faith has not driven him as has often been the case with weaker natures, to the extremes of evangelicalism'.⁷² Her suggestion is in line with Bowen's that the Irish Church was by far the most evangelical section of the Anglican Church.⁷³

Alexander regarded the late nineteenth century as being quite challenging for clergymen.

In these days (believe me for I speak of what I know) the reflective student for Holy Orders passes through a sort of probation unknown in the past generations. A certain number of minds are confirmed in, a certain number adopt, what are technically known as Evangelist principles – for it is not insinuated that no highly gifted mind becomes or remains deeply Evangelical, God forbid. But it is certain that perhaps by a considerable majority, the intellects of gifted students are drawn in other directions. Many of them are hurried by the deep strong current of modern thought and criticism in the direction of what is called Broad Church. Others, again, penetrated by the spirit of antiquity, filled with a majestic conception of the visibility and continuance of the Church, become what is called High Church.⁷⁴

Alexander was attracted to High Churchism but applied the term evangelical to the strong and influential Low Church representation in the diocese. The Duke of Abercorn, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1866-68) and head of the main aristocratic

⁷¹ Alexander, *Primate Alexander*, p.150.

⁷² Ibid., p.77.

⁷³ Bowen, *Protestant Crusade*, p.62.

⁷⁴ Alexander, *Primate Alexander*, p.269.

family in the area, was himself intensely evangelical. Though he supported Alexander's appointment to the bishopric of Londonderry, when informing him of his success he said

You will perhaps allow me to add that I have had a certain amount of a battle to fight against what are supposed to be your High Church view...I may venture to say what I am sure no one is better aware of than yourself, that even a very moderate amount of High Churchism would be more out of place in the Diocese of Derry amongst the somewhat severe and rugged people than perhaps in any other diocese in the kingdom.⁷⁵

The sort of issues that caused disagreement were illustrated by Alexander's acceptance of an invitation to preach at a church in Cardiff which was regarded by the evangelical party as too ritualistic.⁷⁶ Another instance was the extension to the chancel of St. Columb's. This was particularly disliked by the evangelical party who felt it morally wrong to alter the 'siege cathedral' and to remove monuments and tombs from the area designated for development. Higgin had remodelled the church previously but had kept to the footprint of the original building. Further, the evangelical party would not have had the same concerns about undue ritualistic connotations that they clearly had about the reasons for a new chancel which was the special project of the dean, Andrew Ferguson Smyly. While they agreed to the need for more space, they preferred the option of building a new church. An open letter from William Alexander to members of the parish, addressed their arguments against change. He listed the necessity of housing more parishioners, providing a larger church for training preachers, and improving the building so that it would not be a burden to the diocese in the future.⁷⁷ The objections were partly overcome by the discovery of the original foundations for a seventeenth-century chancel. There

⁷⁵ Ibid., pp. 146-7.

⁷⁶ Ibid., pp.277, *Protestant Standard (Liverpool)*, 19 Oct. 1889.

⁷⁷ William Alexander, Rt. Revd., 'Extension to Cathedral', (Londonderry, 1884).

was also a rift between the cathedral and the Free Church because of the content of a parish magazine produced under the aegis of Dean Smyly which was too High Church for the influential evangelical element.⁷⁸ But Alexander's 'crown offence' was his wish to hold a Church Congress in Derry in the early 1890s on the broad lines of an English Church Congress. When the programme appeared 'the storm burst'. He had to remind the General Synod of 1895 in Dublin that 'he was not on his trial for heresy before them.'⁷⁹ The idea was abandoned.

On occasion he appeared to tread a more moderate line than some of the more extreme evangelicals in his congregation cared for. Alexander was invited to preach in all the English cathedrals and innumerable parish churches but in Ulster invitations were few because of 'distrust of what he might say as a High Churchman or nervousness as to what interpretation might be put upon what he said. When he preached to the Apprentice Boys in August 1873, he spoke on the tolerance and intolerance of the Bible. His interpretation of 'the Holy Writ encouraged more toleration than some of the listeners quite liked'.⁸⁰ All this would seem to indicate that there was a strong evangelical party in the Church of Ireland at odds with their bishop's High Church views. This is the interpretation of Marianne Elliot but matters are not so straight-forward.⁸¹ He was invited to preach on several anniversary occasions and had the respect of his congregation. Moreover, Alexander would not have been made Primate had the evangelical party opposed his appointment. Eleanor stated that the bishops would not have ventured to appoint him had Alexander not had cross-the-board support. Despite Low Church ill feeling over the recent issues of the extension of the chancel and

⁷⁸ LS, 19 Dec. 1889.

⁷⁹ Alexander, *Primate Alexander*, pp.276-7.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p.261; LS, 14 Aug. 1873.

⁸¹ M. Elliott, *When God Took Sides: Religion and Identity in Ireland - Unfinished History* (Oxford: OUP, 2009), pp.113-4.

Church Congress, he had the support of many. Notable support, she stated, had come from William Johnston 'whose principles had been so strong that he had suffered imprisonment for them and who was the better able to appreciate unswerving principle in another.'⁸² They recognised Alexander's conviction and principle and may well have noted other qualities.

Alexander did not regard himself as an evangelical but he could be regarded as having some evangelical sympathies. He had undergone a 'conversion' in his days at Oxford. 'From that moment, everything was different' and he determined to become 'a minister of the Gospel of Love'.⁸³ This was illustrated by Alexander's passion for pastoral work in Derry during the famine. He had been a curate in Derry in the late forties and had almost died of a fever resulting from his ministrations. His pastoral work, often conducted in inaccessible parts of the diocese, continued during his episcopate.⁸⁴ Moreover, his sermons had an evangelical quality. Dickson refers to him as an Anglican evangelical because his sermons meet his criteria for evangelical preaching - the centrality of the biblical text, doctrinal fidelity, passion in delivery and fruitfulness in terms of conversion.⁸⁵ Moreover, it was the nature of his preparation which indicates the evangelical quality of the process. Having prepared a skeleton of the sermon and a few minutes worth of argument, he relied on the perceived inspiration of the Holy Spirit to complete the work and bring his task to a successful conclusion.⁸⁶ Alexander described his own sermons as Churchlike, Christian and 'full of peace'.⁸⁷

⁸² Alexander, *Primate Alexander*, p.282.

⁸³ Ibid., p.62.

⁸⁴ Orr, *Servants of Christ*, pp. 91, 93.

⁸⁵ J. N. I. Dickson, *Beyond Religious Discourse*, pp. 60-61, 67-68.

⁸⁶ Ibid., p.68.

⁸⁷ Alexander, *Primate Alexander*, p.262.

Alexander was certainly a famous preacher and evangelical preaching was the crucial part of the church service in Ireland at this period.

Rhetorical eloquence was the ideal for the preacher and carefully written and thought out composition delivered with a dry manner and in even tones did not receive its due.⁸⁸

His obituary in the *Times* referred to Alexander as arguably

the most brilliant of the preachers of his day. Not so powerful as Magee, or so intensely serious and inspiring as Liddon or so persuasively and subtly reasonable as Boyd-Carpenter, he surpassed them all as a master of felicitous and striking phrases.⁸⁹

Therefore in the period under consideration, the Church of Ireland in Londonderry had two bishops who had different political affiliations and doctrinal approaches and who contributed to disunity in certain areas but could be regarded as having evangelical attributes.

Evangelical attributes should more generally be ascribed to the couple who set the tone for the diocese in the second episcopate of the period, rather than to the bishop alone. Cecil Frances wielded considerable influence in the diocese. Alexander's evangelical zeal for duty was matched by that of his wife. They made a pact, after his promotion to be Bishop of Derry, to forego their leisure time together and restrict their literary pursuits so that they could concentrate on pastoral work in the diocese. Since they were both literary figures, this meant considerable personal sacrifice but both had committed themselves to 'duty' from an early age.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Ibid., p.212.

⁸⁹ The *Times*, 13 Sept. 1911.

⁹⁰ V. Wallace, *Mrs. Alexander: the life of the hymn writer Cecil Frances Alexander, 1818-1895* (Lilliput Press, 1995), p.159.

Cecil Frances had been greatly influenced by the evangelical Revd. James Smith, Rector of Strabane. She had lived in Strabane for some years prior to her marriage.⁹¹ Alexander stressed that though she was thoroughly High Church in her views she preferred the plainer service and had become imbued with evangelical principles, meaning she did not care for undue ritualism. Whilst at Strabane, she had founded an auxiliary of the Church Missionary Society, probably during the 1840s, and was active in charity work.⁹² She was also greatly influenced by Dr. Walter Farquhar Hook, Vicar of Leeds and later Dean of Chichester who believed in the synthesis of what was good in both the Oxford and evangelical movements.⁹³

In all, it appears that though High Church in their allegiance, William and Cecil Frances were deeply affected by the evangelical ethos in general if perhaps less at ease with the more Calvinistic manifestation of evangelicalism that developed in the Church of Ireland. They did not regard themselves as evangelicals in a party sense, that description was reserved for what they called the Low Church parishioners but the Alexanders certainly had qualities which put them in sympathy with evangelicals.⁹⁴ They could, in fact, be said to represent a moderate High Church evangelical worldview. Desmond Bowen refers to the presence of High Church evangelicalism in the Irish Church in the mid nineteenth-century. He speaks of evangelical doctrine being dispensed through the established

⁹¹ Alexander, *Primate Alexander*, pp.29-30.

⁹² E. W. Lovell, *A Green Hill Far Away; a life of Mrs. C. F. Alexander* (Friends of St. Columb's Cathedral, 1994), p.28.

⁹³ Cecil Francis Alexander, *Poems* (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1896), preface by William Alexander, p.vii.

⁹⁴ Alexander, *Primate Alexander*, p.77-78.

ordinances and full teaching of the church system.⁹⁵ This was not unknown in the English Church either as evangelical ideas were shaped to fit the demands of denominational heritage. Thus while evangelicalism and High Churchism were not binary opposites, any suggestion of undue ritualism was always divisive. Nonetheless, overall it could be considered that a variety of worldviews existed that were touched by evangelicalism.

As Higgin's evangelicalism helped him connect with his clergy and parishioners despite his Liberal politics, so the Alexanders' conservatism, in worldview as well as politics, would have helped bridge the gap between their High Churchism and the Low Church evangelicals. An indication of their worldview is indicated by their acceptance of gradations in society, a fact which could be readily inferred from the verse, now expunged, from Mrs. Alexander's hymn '*All things bright and beautiful*':

The rich man in his castle,
The poor man at his gate,
God made them high or lowly,
And ordered their estate.⁹⁶

Another indicator is their tolerance of Orangeism, something of which the Liberals strongly disapproved regarding it as sectarian and divisive and damaging to the community.⁹⁷ A different opinion is conveyed by Mrs. Alexander's poems, written under the threat of home rule:

A cloud is on our mountain tops, out of the South it comes.
Shall breath of red sedition breathe its glamour round our homes?
Shall speech of any Fenians find an echo in the North?

⁹⁵ D. Bowen, *Alexander R. C. Dallas: The Warrior Saint*, in *The View from the Pulpit: Victorian Ministers and Society*, ed. by P. T. Phillips, (Toronto: Macmillan, 1978), p.27.

⁹⁶ Wallace, *Mrs. Alexander*, p.70.

⁹⁷ *Londonderry Standard*, 13 July 1870; Peatling, 'Whatever happened to Presbyterian Radicalism?', p.159.

Who gild with golden promises the treason they put forth,
 Would rend in twain the Empire grand, our Empire of renown,
 Set right below expediency, the harp above the crown?
 Nay, not while Ulster's loyal yet, while Orangemen we see
 Determined, brave and peaceable, as Orangemen should be
 Who scorns the call of factious men, whose oath is in his heart
 For love, and truth, and honour, and for the nobler part –
 To bear and quit him like a man, whatever comes between
 For faith, for country, and for home, and for his Lady Queen.⁹⁸

Toleration of commemoration was another link. Mrs. Alexander was sensitive to the history of Derry and had written a poem on the siege.⁹⁹ Her husband did not attempt to stop the commemorative parades but in his anniversary sermon in August 1868, Alexander encouraged his congregation to avoid disrespectful and disloyal behaviour. He told them that they were better off restricting their celebrations than incurring the disdain of educated men.¹⁰⁰ The fact that anniversary celebrations were reported in British newspapers and the recent friction between sections of the community exacerbated by parades did not reflect well on those marching. But Alexander regarded the parades as celebrating a historical event, not party led demonstrations asserting superiority.¹⁰¹ The fact that he countenanced the close involvement of the curate Richard Babington in the Apprentice Boys' Association suggested his acceptance of the organisation.¹⁰² His wife was heavily involved in raising the funds for the completion of the Apprentice Boys' memorial hall.¹⁰³ Edward Dougherty stated after the 1873 religious service for the Relief of Derry that the bishop

has always given his heart and his attachment to the principles of the
 Apprentice Boys and to the glorious traditions of our ancient and loyal city.

⁹⁸ Wallace, *Mrs. Alexander*, p.165. (Written in the period when 'there was growing demand for home rule'.)

⁹⁹ Alexander, *Poems*, pp.149-57.

¹⁰⁰ LS, 14 Aug. 1868.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 20 Dec. 1881.

¹⁰² Rev. Richard Babington joined the AB assn. in 1868 and his influence continued throughout the period studied.

¹⁰³ LS, 14 Aug. 1877.

As a prelate of the church of Ireland, he has never hesitated to associate himself with our sacred commemorations and to give to them the sanction of his high office, and to consecrate to them the great powers of his brilliant and gifted mind. His cathedral has always been the shelter of the Apprentice Boys when every other means of celebration was denied them.¹⁰⁴

Therefore, unlike the situation under Higgin, commemoration was not an unduly divisive topic.

In general, in the period from 1868 until 1886, the cathedral was supportive of commemoration. The deans during this time were important contributors to this.

Hugh Usher Tighe (1860-74), supported commemoration as a covenantal requirement. He believed that God had fought on the side of his people at the siege, quoted the historian Macaulay on the siege¹⁰⁵ from the pulpit and hoped that the importance of commemoration would never be forgotten in the city.¹⁰⁶

Charles Seymour (1874-82), an evangelical, was similarly supportive. He read from Governor Walker's diary and stated that it would show direct ingratitude not to commemorate it in customary fashion.¹⁰⁷ John Gwynn (1882-3) had a different tone in his commemorative sermons which looked to the more spiritual aspects rather than dwelling on the city's history. Gwynn was known for his scholarship. Andrew Ferguson Smyly (1883-97), brother-in-law of William Alexander, quoted from Walker and Macaulay, telling his congregation in troubled times that if they were true to God and led good lives He would give Ulster loyal men His support. He not only gave the commemorative sermon in December 1884 but attended the soiree and raised the toast to the Orangemen of Ireland and Apprentice Boys of Derry.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 1873.

¹⁰⁵ See Chapter 3, p.203.

¹⁰⁶ LS, 20 Dec. 1864.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 20. Dec. 1877.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 20 Dec. 1884.

The division within Presbyterianism was more pronounced. Presbyterianism represented sixty percent of the Protestant population in the city. However, there was a split between those who were Conservative in worldview and the Liberals and that seemed to increase in the mid 1860s. This division was, to an extent, illustrated by church affiliation which may have become less fluid for the Liberal section of the Presbyterian community after the 1859 Revival.

There were four mainstream Presbyterian congregations in Londonderry by 1840. The most imposing Presbyterian building in the city was the First Presbyterian Church (FPC) built in 1780 which could house up to 2,000 people.¹⁰⁹ The second in sequence and prestige was the Strand Road Church built in 1848 to replace the earlier Fountain Road building which the congregation had outgrown. The congregation may have originally left the FPC because they wanted a more evangelical ministry - their inviting Henry Cooke to preach at the opening service would suggest that this was an evangelical and Conservative congregation.¹¹⁰ The third was Great James' Street Church, known as the Scots' Kirk, which opened in 1837 when the moderate conservative evangelical, Samuel Hanna, preached to the congregation. The fourth was in Fountain Street where the congregation had been accepted into the United Secession Synod in 1837. The building was replaced by a larger one in Carlisle Road in 1873. Seceders tended to be orthodox and evangelical in emphasis.¹¹¹ There were also two Covenanting

¹⁰⁹ McGovern, 'Siege Myth', p.159.

¹¹⁰ *History of Congregations of the Presbyterian Churches 1610-1982*, (Belfast: Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland, 1982), p.369.

¹¹¹ W. J. H. McKee, 'The Ulster Revival of 1859 and the Development of Presbyterianism', in *The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland 1840-1990: A celebration of Presbyterian witness during 150 years*, ed. by R. F. G. and Knox R. B. Holmes, vols (Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland, 1990).p.45.

congregations, again conservative, at Fountain Street and the Waterside.¹¹²

Methodism was represented by a Primitive Wesleyan chapel in Magazine Street with provision for 200 people and a New Wesleyan chapel in Linen-Hall Street which could hold up to 650.¹¹³

The Presbyterian churches in Londonderry wielded influence but not to the extent of the Church of Ireland which, aside from being the Established Church (until 1871), had the support of the aristocracy and landed gentry. In spite of doctrinal divisions and the perceived rigidity of Presbyterianism, there had been movement between the Presbyterian Church and Church of Ireland which reflected social mobility. John Ross, son of a Presbyterian minister in Derry asserted that the four Presbyterian churches in Derry reflected a gradation of the wealth and social status of the congregation, the First Presbyterian Church having the congregation of the highest social standing. He stated that as people rose in social status they moved through the Presbyterian churches to the Free Episcopalian Evangelical Church. Finally they were accepted into the Church of Ireland and attended the cathedral.¹¹⁴ This progression was not something approved of by the Presbyterian ministers and it became less common in the period of the Revival when energies were turned inward in traditional Presbyterianism to revitalise religion.

This fluidity was not endorsed by the denominations, but registered a readiness on the part of some members of the congregation of the FPC to put doctrinal differences aside for the sake of social mobility. The fact that they felt comfortable doing so, however, does point to a wider 'Protestant' identity within Derry. The

¹¹² Hempton, *The Siege and History of Londonderry*, p.459.

¹¹³ McGovern, 'Siege Myth', p.161.

¹¹⁴ J. Ross, *The years of my pilgrimage* (London: Arnold, 1924), pp.2-3.

FPC gave leadership to the Presbyterian community and was associated with Liberal tendencies. Its ministers were generally Liberal in outlook, for example Rev. William McClure and Rev. Richard Smyth, but this was not necessarily the case with congregations.¹¹⁵ John Hempton, an evangelical Anglican and leader in the Apprentice Boys in the fifties and early sixties, referred, in correspondence, to support for the anniversary celebrations among the FPC seat-holders, something generally opposed by the Liberals.¹¹⁶ The other Presbyterian churches appear to have had a Conservative element also.

A cross-denominational link might in part be explained by the underlying Calvinist tradition, particularly strong in Presbyterianism but which also had a place within the history of the Church of Ireland. Another factor that might have had a more dramatic influence on such fluidity was evangelicalism. A common base, a united history and the sharing of an evangelical, and possibly a premillennial outlook could do a lot to explain this. But while there may have been a common base for Conservatives, there were definite divisions between Conservative and Liberal worldviews.

When Smart's schema¹¹⁷ is applied in outline to the worldview of Liberal Presbyterians, and compared to the Conservative worldview (analysed in detail in the next chapter) differences within dimensions are immediately noticeable. Readiness or otherwise to step aside from denominational **doctrine** was the first issue. Conservatives were more inclined to seek Protestant unity while Liberals were more separatist in behaviour. Although a common base existed in doctrinal

¹¹⁵ Ibid., pp.12-14.

¹¹⁶ LS, 16 Aug. 1864.

¹¹⁷ See Introduction, pp.8-10.

issues to facilitate Protestant union, Liberals tended to pay lip service to this and maintained their separate identity until realities dictated the vulnerability of such a stance. Secondly, there was a disparity in interpretation within the **narrative** dimension as to who was being referred to as Ulster's 'covenanted people', whether this embraced only the traditional Presbyterian community or the wider Protestant community. There was a divergence in interpretation of myth relating to the siege of Derry whereby the Liberal view, focussing on the policies of William III, was that it was an exemplar for toleration. As a result, attitudes to **ritual** commemorative parades differed as did the manner in which **ethics** were applied to the question of marching when the Roman Catholic community were in opposition.

Different attitudes came into play over certain aspects of **material** culture, demonstrated by such issues as the perceived appropriateness of bringing flags into church. This divergence was maintained in **social** attitudes reflecting a group's desire for separation or inclusiveness, **experiential** in response to revivalism and conversionism (the Liberal Presbyterians were more conservative in their response), and **political** where the differences were clearly demonstrated. So in all of Smart's dimensions, differences can be detected. The Conservative evangelicals referred to the Liberals as 'orthodox'. Although they had evangelical qualities, Liberals applied their revivalist zeal to reforming their orthodox tradition and asserting their denomination's individual identity rather than seeking union across denomination and minimising differences.¹¹⁸ This suggests that a variety of interpretations existed about what constituted an evangelical. These were

¹¹⁸ LS, 19 Dec. 1871.

accommodated within a theoretical, overarching evangelicalism which would only become a viable means of unification when political differences were overcome.

Part of this divergence within churches and between congregations appears to be due to their various interpretations of eschatology. The Romantic ethos that predated the Revival period with its emphasis on intensity of feeling, individual experience and emotion had given rise to historicist premillennialism in the Established Church. Evidence from the sermons analysed in the next chapter suggests that this had been embraced by the Conservative evangelicals, both Anglican and Presbyterian. Historicism meant that the Bible was used as a key to interpret history but Presbyterians tended to be divided on how prophecy should be applied to contemporary incidents. Premillennialists tended to employ a more literalist hermeneutic. In the optimistic worldview of postmillennialism, believers could help bring about the millennium through 'prayers, financial contributions, and service in the cause of mission and revival'.¹¹⁹ This was the message emanating from Magee College and the First Presbyterian Church and probably the outlook of many of the Presbyterian ministers.

Some Presbyterians, however, were influenced by the conservative views of Henry Cooke. For them the attributes of premillennialism, biblical literalism, social and ecclesiastical pessimism, Calvinism, anti-Catholicism, anti-radicalism, anti-rationalism and support for the Established Church certainly applied.¹²⁰ There was also a common base within eschatology and evangelicalism of authority of Scripture, conversionism and views on afterlife. It is, however, acknowledged that this is a generalisation in an area that exhibits much variety and complexity.

¹¹⁹ A.R. Holmes 'The Uses and Interpretation of Prophecy', p.145.

¹²⁰ I. McBride, 'Evangelicalism and eschatology', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 31(1980), p.191.

Nonetheless, it is clear that Irish evangelicals sometimes adopted compatible and sometimes mutually incompatible approaches to the prophetic literature of Scripture and this may have been a contributory factor enabling Conservative union across denomination and division within Londonderry Presbyterianism.¹²¹

Andrew Holmes argues that postmillennialism was firmly fostered in Irish Presbyterianism 'by the Reformed and evangelical consensus that existed in the two colleges of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Assembly's College, Belfast, and Magee College, Derry'.¹²² This optimistic outlook was also illustrated in their interpretation of history and affected how commemoration was regarded. Thomas Witherow's history, titled *Derry and Enniskillen*, presents a Liberal view of 'William III as a champion of religious toleration frustrated by the bigots of the established church'.¹²³ Conservative historians leaned towards 'a cyclical view of history, underlining the need for constant vigilance against an unchanging Catholic threat'. Witherow, however, had an optimistic reading of the past and anticipated a brighter future.¹²⁴ Public commemoration was not regarded as a worthwhile venture as it gave offence to Roman Catholic countrymen reminding them of their defeat and humiliation.¹²⁵ Witherow was appointed to the chair of history at Magee College in 1865.

William McClure and Richard Smyth were also closely involved with Magee College, McClure as a trustee and Smyth as a member of the academic staff. Both were also heavily involved with the Liberal Party in Derry. McClure was

¹²¹ *Protestant Millennialism, Evangelicalism and Irish Society, 1790-2005*, ed. by Gribben and Holmes, introduction p.21.

¹²² A.R. Holmes 'The Uses and Interpretation of Prophecy', p145.

¹²³ McBride, *Siege of Derry*, pp.64-65.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

personally thanked for his support by the newly elected Sergeant Dowse in the Liberal MP's victory speech in 1868.¹²⁶ Smyth (1826-1878) was an important figure who started his career in Londonderry as minister of the FPC between 1857–1865. He then held the position of Professor of Oriental Languages and Theology at Magee in 1865, held the Moderator's chair between 1868 and 1870, and became Liberal Member for County Londonderry between 1874 and his death in 1878. At that period, his position as an MP was unique in the Presbyterian Church.¹²⁷ Smyth was from a tenant farming background and felt compelled to stand up for such farmers' rights. He took only a modest part in debate in parliament, however, throwing his energies into moral reform. Witherow stated that the Sunday Closing Act, though neither instigated nor brought to conclusion by Smyth, was very much 'the child of his genius'.¹²⁸

An area where Church of Ireland representatives and Liberal Presbyterians did come together was voluntarism. Both were active in Londonderry's voluntary societies. Continuing the trend set early in the century, evidence from 1862 shows the strength of church involvement. Some societies were specific to a particular church. For example, the bishop was president of the Church Missionary Society and the Gospel Propagation Society. Others had a wider committee suggesting a degree of co-operation as was the case with the Hibernian Bible Society, with the bishop as president and William McClure in support. The bishop and McClure were both present on the board of Gwyn's Charitable Institute.¹²⁹ The City Mission, although linked to the Presbyterian Church, was supported by all denominations of Protestants and was established for promoting the religious improvement of the

¹²⁶ McGovern, 'Siege Myth', p.233.

¹²⁷ *Funeral address delivered by Rev. Prof. Witherow, Londonderry, Moderator of General Assembly 1878, on Rev. Richard Smith, Union College of Theology, Magee Pam. 116.*

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Gwyn's Charitable Institute, Meetings of Trustees, pp. 2-3.

ignorant and spiritually destitute in the city and neighbourhoods of Derry, especially the Presbyterian poor.¹³⁰

There were other organisations involving several denominations. Some were headed by laity and women played an important role. In these Cecil Frances Alexander played her part. The greater involvement of women in voluntary organisations was a feature of the nineteenth century. Although charity work and giving alms had been an aspect of religion since the earliest period of the Christian Church, it was only in the nineteenth century that opportunities were so frequent and diverse.¹³¹ Approximately three quarters of the charitable organisations in Britain during the second half of the nineteenth century were evangelical in character. Ireland seemed to follow the same trend and in both countries much of the work and leadership of these societies were in the hands of women.¹³² During her period in Derry, Mrs. Alexander was active in the Girls' Friendly Society, the Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute for Nurses (forerunner of the District Nurse scheme) and the Home for Fallen Women. In this philanthropic effort she was aided by 'pious ladies, not members of our Church, for whom I felt a very deep affection'.¹³³ From the above, it is evident that there was some cross-church involvement at the level of voluntarism, not only by ministers but also by laity.

The suggestion that there was a single popular evangelical sub-culture that crossed denominations outside Church regulation seems less plausible when issues such as politics and eschatology were becoming more divisive even within

¹³⁰ *Derry Almanac, North West Directory and General Advertiser for 1862*, (Londonderry: Sentinel Office, 1862), p.94.

¹³¹ Janice Holmes, *Religious Revivals*, p.104.

¹³² *Ibid.*; K. Heasman, *Evangelicals in Action* (London: 1962), p.14; M. Luddy, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (Cambridge: 1995).

¹³³ Alexander, *Poems*, p.xiv-xv.

denominations. These issues were similarly divisive within the wider evangelical sub-culture. It follows that there was more than one sub culture which evangelicalism facilitated but it did not define the boundaries. It facilitated an alliance between evangelical Anglicans and Conservative Presbyterians but it also divided Presbyterianism. Both Conservative and Liberal Presbyterians were true to their religious objectives, either conservatively maintaining what had been divinely ordained or embracing Liberal optimism and changing society in an attempt to build a better world.¹³⁴ Evangelicalism coloured both worldviews, providing a common presence of biblicism, crucicentrism and conversionism. The crucial component that could facilitate unity or division was activism. This provided the drive, stamina and passion with which each group would pursue its separate goals until pragmatism dictated otherwise in the face of perceived common danger. When faced by home rule, differences could be subsumed, each faction falling back on common principles within evangelicalism and eschatology to enable alliance and unity.

The Unifying Influences of Ulster Revival (1859) and the Ideology of the Evangelical Alliance

The accepted view of historians 'portrays the Revival against the background of the growing influence of evangelical religion within Ulster Protestantism'.¹³⁵ The lead in the revival was taken by the Presbyterians who had a more consolidated orthodox base after the expulsion of Arianism from the Synod of Ulster. This allowed unification with the more orthodox and evangelical Secession Synod in 1840 and the focus purportedly turned from internal doctrinal disputes to a desire

¹³⁴ B. Hilton, *The Age of Atonement: The Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought, 1795 - 1865* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), pp.16-17.

¹³⁵ Holmes, *Religious Revivals*, p.4.

for mission. Evidence of this change of ethos within Presbyterianism was provided in a lecture given by Rev. Thomas Witherow. He emphasised how sermons at the turn of the century had been vague moral essays with 'ice in the pulpit and snow in the pews'. In 1855, there were missions, Sabbath Schools, evangelistic labours, a signed (Westminster) Confession and pointed doctrinal sermons glowing with fervour.¹³⁶ Against this backdrop, a powerful explosion of religious excitement emerged in the North and remained for the summer months of 1859.¹³⁷ Over time, the revival came to be regarded as both a 'historical event and a supernatural encounter invested with almost mythical significance'.¹³⁸

The awakening first reached Londonderry on the eve of Whit Sunday, 12 June 1859. An open air meeting took place in Victoria Market under Methodist and Presbyterian leadership when ministers Wallace, Smyth and Donnelly addressed the meeting. That evening Rev. Richard Smyth and his brother, Rev. Jackson Smyth from First Armagh, and the Rev. Marshall Moore of Second Glendermott along with six young converts spoke to crowds at the quayside.¹³⁹ On Whit Sunday the work of the Revival was perceived to begin in earnest. Converts were of all ages, ranks and condition and crowds of four to five thousand of all denominations gathered in the Victoria Market every evening.¹⁴⁰

Richard Smyth of the FPC was heavily involved in the revival addressing the first open-air meeting. Protestant ministers including Denham, Ross, Crawford, McClure and Wilson (Presbyterian), Wallace and Donnelly (Methodist) and Sewell (Congregational) were also involved from the earliest stages. However, the

¹³⁶ Scott, *The Ulster Revival*, p.148.

¹³⁷ Holmes, *Religious Revivals*, p.3.

¹³⁸ Hempton and Hill, *Evangelical Protestantism in Ulster*, p.146.

¹³⁹ Scott, *The Ulster Revival*, pp.91-2.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

Church of Ireland initially kept its distance. The popular Anglican response was rather different and the *Londonderry Sentinel* questioned, on their behalf, the advisability of clergy standing back and looking coldly on a movement which people had every reason to believe was divinely approved.¹⁴¹ There were also reports of large numbers of Anglicans becoming members of the Presbyterian Church.¹⁴² However, on 26th June it was announced that the cathedral would be open for divine service on Wednesday and Friday evenings and that the Chapel of Ease would be open on the other evenings.¹⁴³

While the Bishop of Down, Connor and Dromore, Dr. Robert Knox (who chaired the Belfast meeting of the Evangelical Alliance) supported the Revival, William Higgin, of Derry and Raphoe diocese, was more qualified in his welcome. He circulated through the diocese a letter written by his Archdeacon, Rev. Arthur Edwards, which gave an opinion endorsed by both Higgin and the Primate. They questioned the advisability of joining other denominations as it might result in 'confusion and doubtfulness of mind' in the long term. They believed the reasons for divisions in Protestantism still held and it would be more appropriate to forward the cause in the spirit of mutual love and forbearance while remaining within their own boundaries.¹⁴⁴

Higgin was known to be evangelical but for him the divisive border of denomination still held strong and evangelical principles were to be observed firmly within the traditions of the Established Irish Church. It is also interesting to note that it was felt to be dangerous that the people should take the lead in such

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid, p.171.

¹⁴³ Ibid, p.92.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., p.172.

matters; this was the role of the clergy. In fact the local Conservative newspaper, normally supportive of the Church, pointed out that while 'the laity of the Anglican church were throwing themselves heart and soul into the movement, some of the clergy stand aloof'.¹⁴⁵ The Presbyterian newspaper, the *Londonderry Standard*, stated that the Church of Ireland had at last opened its doors for revival services accommodating the wishes of their people. It noted that the services provided were denominational and lacked the 'ennobling element of evangelical comprehension'.¹⁴⁶ However, a later edition of the *Londonderry Sentinel* asserted that the bishop and clergy, including Reverends Beresford, Smith, Babington, Escot and Battensby, were actively engaged in the work of revival.¹⁴⁷

Rev. Richard Smyth highlighted the fact that there were a significant proportion of nominal Protestants in Derry. He asserted that during the Revival he had a hundred communicants more than usual and two hundred more were converted to Presbyterianism. Some would have come from this nominal group but there was evidence of significant conversions from Anglicanism.¹⁴⁸ This statistic applied to the First Presbyterian Church but he added that it was the same for other Presbyterian congregations and for the Wesleyan and Independent and Reformed congregations also.¹⁴⁹ The *Londonderry Standard* referred to thousands of Protestants, many working-class Presbyterians, returning to the churches after many years' absence.¹⁵⁰ Whether the converts remained or drifted away after the intensity of the revival had waned, a picture emerges of a large number of the population sensitive to the spirit of evangelicalism but not necessarily bound within denominations or affiliated to a particular church.

¹⁴⁵ LS, 24 Jun. 1859.

¹⁴⁶ *Londonderry Standard*, 30 Jun. 1859.

¹⁴⁷ LS, 1 Jul. 1859.

¹⁴⁸ Scott, *The Ulster Revival*, pp.171-2.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p.92.

¹⁵⁰ *Londonderry Standard*, 25 Jun. 1859.

The sense of popular cross-denominational co-operation was embraced by the Apprentice Boys in this period. The religious service was at the centre of the commemorative event, preceded by a church parade and after by a gathering and, when not banned, a more secular parade. Between 1857 and 1865, the August commemorative service was held in one of the Presbyterian churches. The alternative venue to the cathedral for the August service had been the FPC in recent years but this unity of purpose did not last beyond the mid sixties. There was a disagreement with ministers and elders and the Apprentice Boys' committee about the appropriate nature of commemoration.¹⁵¹ It was felt by the former that this should be confined to a church service, and flags used in the procession were banned from the church. Since agreement could not be reached, the venue was closed to the association permanently. The Strand Presbyterian Church was the venue the following year, but lacking the capacity of the FPC, the services reverted to the cathedral though the majority of the membership was Presbyterian.¹⁵² So the evangelical unity observed in the church services during the Revival was fading by the mid 1860s. Rev. Robert Donnell, Presbyterian chaplain of the Apprentice Boys stated that if the Apprentice Boys stopped voting Conservative and voted for the Liberal candidate they would be welcomed into the FPC.¹⁵³ Evangelical unity became the casualty of faction as divisions reflected by politics asserted themselves.

Another instance reflecting the fragility of collective Protestant unity was the 1859 meeting of the Evangelical Alliance, held in Belfast because of the attraction of the Revival which seemed to endorse its own principle of Protestant unity.¹⁵⁴ The

¹⁵¹ See Chapter 4, p.261.

¹⁵² *LS*, 16 Aug. 1864.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 13 Aug. 1867.

¹⁵⁴ See Chapter 1, pp.65-6.

Alliance, formed in London in 1846, had significant influence throughout Europe and held such unity as its primary object. However, this was not an attempt to unite denominations actively but rather to recognise and accept the concept of unity that in theory already existed in the 'one Christian Church'. The idea was to overcome the quibbling that caused unnecessary divisions between denominations allowing the development of 'a living and everlasting union (that) binds all true believers together in the fellowship of the Church of Christ'.¹⁵⁵ The means of achieving this was 'to form a confederation on the basis of great evangelical principles held in common' by members, the goal being to 'cultivate brotherly love, enjoying Christian intercourse' and to promote 'such other objects as they may hereafter agree to prosecute together'.¹⁵⁶ Such brotherly co-operation was echoed in the Revival.

The doctrinal principles of the Alliance reflected the basic common ground of evangelical Protestantism:

1. The Divine inspiration, authority and sufficiency of the Holy Scripture
2. The right and duty of private judgment in the interpretation of Holy Scripture
3. The unity of the Godhead and the Trinity of Persons therein
4. The utter depravity of human nature in consequence of the fall
5. The incarnation of the Son of God, His work of atonement for sinners of mankind and His mediatory intercession and reign
6. The justification of the sinner by faith alone
7. The work of the Holy Spirit in the conversion and sanctification of the sinner
8. The immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body, the judgment of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, with the eternal blessedness of the righteous and the eternal punishment of the wicked
9. The Divine institution of the Christian ministry and the obligation and perpetuity of the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

These principles were not to be regarded as a confession or creed or as the basis of an independent church, but to be 'simply indicative of the class of persons

¹⁵⁵ *Transactions of the Thirteenth Annual Conference held at Belfast on 20-24 Sept. 1859*, (London: Evangelical Alliance - British organisation, 1860), pp. 60-61.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.60-61.

whom it is desirable to embrace in the Alliance'.¹⁵⁷ What they did provide, however, was a common denominator for Ulster Protestantism when it was perceived to be politically expedient to unite effectively.

'Subservient' to the great object of unity, but, nonetheless central to the aims of the organisation, was the endeavour 'to exert a beneficial influence on the advancement of evangelical Protestantism, and on the counteraction of Infidelity, Popery and other forms of superstition, error and profaneness, especially the desecration of the Lord's day.'¹⁵⁸ The Alliance was anti-Catholic but it adopted a milder stance towards Rome than other anti-Catholic societies. It would only commit itself collectively towards the task of assembling relevant information.¹⁵⁹ Again, it was a compromise position that did not satisfy all. Nonetheless, in Belfast it appeared to take on a more anti-Catholic stance than in England though evangelical Protestants looking for more positive action, such as Johnston, formed Protestant Associations or joined the Orange Order, associations which tended to unite those who shared a particular worldview.

The Alliance was well represented in Ireland with branches in Dublin, Londonderry, Cork, Limerick, Belfast, Armagh, Newry where monthly meetings generally took place.¹⁶⁰ At the Belfast meeting, of the three Derry clergy listed, two were Liberal Presbyterians, Robert Ross and William McClure. McClure, later to be Moderator of the Synod of Ulster, was an enthusiastic evangelical who had been sent in 1858 to America to investigate and report back on the Revival there. The Liberal MP, Samuel Greer, was also in attendance. The Alliance was

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ J. Wolffe, 'The Evangelical Alliance in the 1840s, pp.340-41.

¹⁶⁰ *BNL*, 20 Apr. 1855.

associated with religious conservatism but not necessarily political Conservatism. The Belfast conference, however, was predominantly Conservative. This was asserted by the Bishop of Down and Connor (Robert Knox) who attended the conference and, though not being a member of the Alliance, had some sympathy with its aims.¹⁶¹ He referred to his own political opinions, which were Liberal, and stated that they were not largely shared by the meeting. Conservative evangelicals were represented by such individuals as Lord Roden, Henry Cooke and William McIlwaine.¹⁶² So the Alliance attracted support from a variety of political backgrounds. But it reflected a more theoretical than solid unity.

The topical issues of the Belfast evangelical conference were the Revival and opposition to the Papacy in its demands for a separate educational structure. With regard to the latter, Bishop Knox, who chaired the meeting of the Alliance, stated that:

no-one on this platform or in this country, would be willing to extend more fully than I am every right and every privilege to my Roman Catholic fellow subjects which I enjoy and participate in myself. But sir,... I felt that their claim was not a claim for tolerance, which I certainly would have extended to them, but that their resolutions embodied in their pastoral addresses have passed without the safe limits of a just toleration and assumed the character of an intolerable and dangerous ascendancy. That sir, I neither claim for myself nor will I be willing to extend it to others for it is not based on the just demand for that toleration which I hold to be the foundation and keystone of our civil and religious liberties.¹⁶³

Politically, the Conservative Party most strongly opposed Catholicism. Securing the landed interest and union with Britain were key issues in maintaining a Protestant hegemony. Liberal attitudes were more tolerant and accommodating,

¹⁶¹ *Transactions of EA*, p.49.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, p.27.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, p.49.

though still anti-Catholic. In this case, however, with the perception that the Papacy had overstepped the mark, the Liberal bishop could find common cause with the more entrenched Conservative element. This provided a foretaste of what was to come with the controversial issue of home rule in the 1880s.

The fragility of the 1859 union, however, was reflected by bickering.¹⁶⁴ Broad principles might unite but more challenging issues, like commemoration, would cause disagreement. What separated members of the Alliance was the detail of their worldviews. Only wider non-controversial issues like missionary work effectively united them. Moreover, the Revival that purported to unite across the board caused traditional Presbyterians in Londonderry to turn their energies towards religious renewal within denomination thus fostering separateness and difference. It was more than politics that divided and evangelicalism and Revivalism contributed an edge to the divisions.

Disestablishment – Unity and Division

Disestablishment was a controversial issue in Ulster Protestantism and divided it along Liberal and Conservative lines. Gladstone had converted to the idea in the 1840s but it only became a burning issue in the 1860s as it became clear that for Roman Catholics the Established Church in Ireland was a grievance that needed to be addressed. The first reliable denominational statistics for Ireland from 1861 indicated that only one eighth of the population were Church of Ireland thus making arguments for establishment hard to sustain. Gladstone used the issue to unite the Liberal party and when he came to power in 1868 he was committed to

¹⁶⁴ See Chapter 1, p.69.

disestablishing the Irish Church. Doctrine was an aspect of worldview that in theory could be neutralised through evangelicalism to the extent that it could be pared down to generally accepted common principles. This was not the case with politics. Politics could unite across denomination and have a markedly divisive effect within denomination. This was the case with Presbyterianism in Derry.

The divisions in Derry had been clearly established as the issue came to a head. John Ross, MP for Londonderry 1892-1895 and Lord Chancellor of Ireland, 1921-1922, was the son of Robert Ross, minister of the fourth Presbyterian Church. He had grown up in Derry and stated in his autobiography that until the franchise was extended in 1867, with the passing of the Second Reform Act giving many skilled artisans the vote, Londonderry had been a safe Conservative seat. This meant politics had not had the same divisive quality, the status quo being effectively unchallengeable. Before that year 'the clergy of all denominations were friendly to one another' and all was quiet and God-fearing and 'there seemed to be room for everyone'.¹⁶⁵ The situation changed in 1868 with Liberalism growing in strength and the threat of disestablishment looming.

In 1868, the Presbyterian vote became crucial in Derry. The Reform Act broadened the social base of the electorate making Derry more independent of landed control.¹⁶⁶ There was an increase of 70% in electors, 46% being Catholic. To preserve the status quo, the Conservatives needed full Presbyterian support but this was divided. Brian Walker's figures for the 1868 election indicate that while 163 Presbyterians voted for the Liberal candidate, as did 13 Anglicans, 27

¹⁶⁵ Ross, *The years of my pilgrimage*, p.11.

¹⁶⁶ F. Thompson, *The End of Liberal Ulster: Land agitation and land reform 1868-1886* (Belfast: Ulster Historical Foundation, 2001), p.136.

Nonconformists and 501 Roman Catholics, 259 Presbyterians voted Conservative.¹⁶⁷ The split in the Presbyterian vote had serious consequences as the Conservatives lost the seat.

A significant number of Derry Presbyterians were active in the Liberal Party. For the Presbyterian middle class, the Liberal party became the vehicle for their ambitions and objectives. Disestablishment was a major issue for them as they wanted a level playing field in religious terms. Their later identification with tenant right gave Liberalism a potential for growth in Ulster which its members had scarcely dreamed of in the 1860s.¹⁶⁸ Two of the leading lights were ministers of the First Presbyterian Church. William McClure and Richard Smyth were instrumental in extending their crusade beyond the pulpit to 'a more pronounced political involvement'.¹⁶⁹ Lord Hamilton, Conservative candidate in 1868, accused Derry's Presbyterian ministers of encouraging their congregations to vote Liberal, thus playing a part in his defeat.¹⁷⁰ What is notable, however, is that less than half of the congregations did. Moreover, not all ministers were Liberal.

With disestablishment of the Irish Church on the political agenda Presbyterian ministers were split on the issue. Opposed to the implications for Protestantism in Ireland if there was no Protestant establishment and aware of the financial loss of the *regium donum*, Presbyterian Conservatives supported their evangelical counterparts in the Church of Ireland. They were guided in their opinions by the advice given by the recently deceased Rev. Henry Cooke who had emphasised the common root of both Anglican and Presbyterian churches in the Reformation

¹⁶⁷ B. Walker, *Ulster Politics: the Formative Years, 1868-86* (Belfast: UHF and IIS, 1989), p.63.

¹⁶⁸ Thompson, *End of Liberal Ulster*, p.135.

¹⁶⁹ See pp. 146-7.

¹⁷⁰ Walker, *Ulster Politics*, p.62.

and the importance of maintaining a favoured position of at least one of the reformed churches in Ireland. 'The... principle of establishments is Scriptural, and the Church now established, with many serious blemishes, is sound at the bottom. All this you will perhaps say is no small confession from an Irish Presbyterian'.¹⁷¹ The Liberal Presbyterians, however, were anti-establishment before 1869. They felt that the title 'Church of Ireland' somehow relegated other denominations to non-Christian status. It also represented Protestant hegemony, or rather Anglican hegemony, under which Presbyterians had suffered as well as Catholics. In the event, the Assembly decided to restrict its negotiations with government to the matter of endowment, the sum given annually by the government to Presbyterian ministers, which would cease with disestablishment.¹⁷² The extent of the division was indicated by the vote on the endowment debate in the General Assembly in 1868. A calculation from the voting list would suggest that approximately 46% were in favour of disestablishment and 54% opposed.¹⁷³ The extent of the division within the denomination was reflected in Derry by the fact that Ross's father, Rev. Robert Ross of Fourth Derry, lost half of his congregation because he had voted Liberal against Lord Claud Hamilton.¹⁷⁴ This suggests that a significant element of the congregations were more Conservative than their ministers.

The Conservative Protestant voters within Presbyterianism made common cause with Conservative Anglicans. Such unity was reflected in the Londonderry Working Men's Protestant Defence Association, the inaugural meeting of which took place on 17th April 1868. The objects of the Association were:

¹⁷¹ J. L. Porter, *The Life and Times of Henry Cooke* (Belfast: Ambassador, 1999), p.234.

¹⁷² Hempton and Hill, *Evangelical Protestantism in Ulster*, p.164.

¹⁷³ *Endowment Debate in the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland* (Belfast: Aitcheson, 1868), pp.5-8.

¹⁷⁴ Ross, *The years of my pilgrimage*, pp.14-15.

1. To unite Protestants of every denomination in the defence and support of the rights of the Protestant Establishment and Endowed Churches of the Empire, believing them to be depositories of sacred truth and a means of promoting loyalty and securing liberty in Ireland and to encourage and strengthen the principles of loyalty to the throne.
2. To determinedly oppose all schemes for the endowment of Popery, alike regardless of the party from which they may emanate, or the policy by which they may emanate or the policy by which they may be dictated, and to resist all efforts of the Church of Rome to obtain undue control over education provided by the state. (This was an objection to levelling up.)
3. To use our best endeavours to carry out these objectives by propagating right views on religious and political matters among our working brethren; and by stirring up our members to united and continuous action in belief of sound constitutional principles and Protestant truth.¹⁷⁵

The association was similar to the Belfast Protestant Working Men's Association in Belfast that gave its support to Johnston's parliamentary candidature.¹⁷⁶ However, it was less independent of clerical and upper class influence. The purpose was described, during the course of the meeting, as being to unite the evangelical denominations against a common enemy.¹⁷⁷ Rev. H. P. Charlton (Presbyterian) said that he had no time for those in the city (Liberal Presbyterians) who tried to sever the connection between the churches of Christ. He spoke of the union that should always exist between evangelicals.¹⁷⁸ Liberals were regarded as having betrayed evangelical unity.

There was a mix of classes with the working-class well represented. Men of influence and position included John Guy Ferguson (Governor of the Apprentice Boys' Association), Stewart Blacker (a high ranking Orange officer who gave the address), James Corscaden (city merchant) and various other clergymen. These were Rev. J. Crawford of Strand Presbyterian Church (who stated 'I attend as a Presbyterian Protestant not given to change'), Rev. F. Smith of the Episcopalian

¹⁷⁵ *Londonderry Working Men's Protestant Defence Association, Report of Inaugural Meeting, 17th April 1868*, (Londonderry: 1868), p.iii.

¹⁷⁶ Hirst, *Religion, Politics and Violence*, pp.131-137.

¹⁷⁷ *LWMPDA*, p.14.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid*, p.10.

Free Church, and Rev. E. Dougherty and Rev. R. Babington of the Church of Ireland. They made joint cause. The Presbyterian ministers opposed disestablishment of the Church of Ireland while Episcopalians opposed the withdrawal of the *regium donum* from the Presbyterians. The denominational mix was marked: Presbyterians, Anglicans, Wesleyans, Baptists and others were represented.¹⁷⁹

They were bound by compatible worldviews. Their commonality was highlighted by a declaration of the nature of the assembly. It was stated that those involved were not democrats but supported the gradations of ranks which existed under the British Constitution. The purpose of the organisation was said to be to educate the working classes and elevate them intellectually so that they could escape the snares of those who would delude them. Meetings were to be set up at regular intervals delivered by 'gentlemen of ability and sterling principles' and there would be a newsroom in which members could pursue for themselves a course of self education.¹⁸⁰ This reflects the unity of purpose within Orangeism, and the Apprentice Boys at this period, with clergy and gentlemen joining the rank and file because the issue of disestablishment drew them together in common cause. Moderate Conservatives like Bishop Alexander could also unite on such issues as indicated by the report of the second meeting.¹⁸¹

At this event, the following month, the chair was taken by John Barre Beresford, Vice Lieutenant of Londonderry, and supported by 'many men of influence and position'. The address was given by Rev. John Bryson, Presbyterian Minister,

¹⁷⁹ Ibid, p.19.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid, pp.v-vi.

¹⁸¹ Rev. J. Bryson, *Address at Corporation Hall on 20th May 1868 (1868)*, pp.5-6.

Fourtowns, Newry, who opposed disestablishment and favoured Protestant unity.¹⁸² When the report was published it had an introduction by William Alexander who said 'without agreeing with every statement', it was clear to him that Mr. Bryson had produced 'a masterpiece of argument'. He stated that while he and Bryson might differ in many areas, he himself would support the Church of Scotland were it faced with similar circumstances on the grounds of national faith, national recognition of Christ, and the unnumbered blessings which establishment had given the land.¹⁸³ There was thus a convergence of compatible evangelical worldviews sharing a strong Conservative base and uniting across traditional boundaries of denomination and class on the issue of disestablishment. The issue, however, could not unite all evangelicals. Liberals remained outside the fold.

With the Irish Church disestablished and disendowed many Anglicans were 'overwhelmed with bitterness'. Liberal Protestants were called Lundys and traitors. Ross quotes Cecil Francis Alexander whose poem was read in Anglican churches in January 1871:

Look down, Lord of Heaven, on our desolation,
Fallen, fallen, fallen, is now our Country's crown,
Dimly dawns the new year on a churchless nation,
Ammon and Amalek tread our borders down.¹⁸⁴

At the time, Alexander had spoken in the House of Lords on the disestablishment issue asking if members wished to cover the land with the thick darkness of

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Ibid., *Address*, introduction.

¹⁸⁴ Ross, *The years of my pilgrimage*, pp.14-15.

Ultramontane superstition.¹⁸⁵ He spoke of his belief that 'the disestablishment of the Irish Church will not tend to appease Irish discontent but, instead of doing so, will give the Irish opposition to the union with Great Britain the increased violence which comes from a taste of success without the satisfaction of the appetite'. His words were later perceived by some as prophetic and hinted at the coming issue of home rule.¹⁸⁶ Alexander, in later days, said to his friend, the Presbyterian clergyman David Miller, that 'during the unhappy fight over the Establishment question in 1869, I got into unhappy relations with some of the members of your church – and said bitter things – but that is all past. ...the days were for myself when old Oxford teachings hung probably too much about me, but acquaintance with good men and women of other communions has taught me many lessons.'¹⁸⁷

After the decision had been made, the Liberal *Londonderry Standard* cautiously considered relations with the disestablished Church. It stated in 1871 that on behalf of 'every evangelical Presbyterian' there would be 'no cold reluctance on the side of Presbyterianism, provided only that the genuine doctrines of the Protestant Reformation, and nothing else shall be embodied in the formularies of the reconstructed Episcopal church'.¹⁸⁸ This was a luke-warm offer when compared to the congregations of the Primitive Methodists, strongly evangelical, who sent a communication to the convention held in October 1870 suggesting their possible reunion with the disestablished Church of Ireland.¹⁸⁹ Where Liberal Presbyterians and Anglicans were concerned, there was more dividing them than doctrine; other worldviews held them apart and also split their own denomination.

¹⁸⁵ Hansard, 14 June 1869.

¹⁸⁶ Leslie, *Clergy of Derry and Raphoe: Part 2*, pp.23-25.

¹⁸⁷ Alexander, *Primate Alexander*, pp.299-300.

¹⁸⁸ *Londonderry Standard*, 20 May 1871.

¹⁸⁹ Alexander, *Primate Alexander*, p.180.

The reconstruction was also to raise old divisions between High Church and Low Church. The influential Calvinistic party had strong opinions about the future of the disestablished church, particularly with regard to ritualism. This manifested itself in a meeting of delegates in Dublin where it was 'more than hinted that the Dukes of Leinster and Abercorn would be suitable heads of the church instead of the Primate and Archbishop of Dublin'. Gentlemen of the 'extreme Protestants ...wished to belong to an Episcopal Church without bishops'.¹⁹⁰ The common dislike of High Churchism eased the relationship between Low Church Anglicans and Conservative Presbyterians.

For all concerned, the question of the revision of the prayer book was a burning issue. The Presbyterians and Low Church Anglicans had similar views about ritualism and were suspicious of High Churchism. A compromise was reached in October 1870 that held High and Low Churchmen together but was a shot across the bows for ritualism. It was decided that 'a Committee be prepared to consider whether, without making any such alteration in the Liturgy or formularies of our Church as would involve or imply a change in her doctrine, any measure can be suggested calculated to check the introduction and spread of novel doctrines and practices opposed to the principles of our Reformed church'.¹⁹¹

With, as it turned out, little changed, the concern of both the Low Church party and the Presbyterians about undue ritualism in the reconstructed Church were assuaged - though the issue was constantly monitored. But the battle of worldviews with Liberal Presbyterians continued in the seventies as the Liberals, through the vehicle of tenant-right, challenged the position of the landlords, the

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 175.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., p. 180.

second prong of Anglican hegemony, in an effort to reduce their power and empower their tenants. The Land Act of 1881, however, though not settling the land question, took the heat out of the situation as moderate opinion favoured acceptance and rejection was associated with Land League militants.¹⁹² With the threat of home rule, the situation changed.

Home Rule

The concept of home rule unified Conservatives and Liberal Presbyterians in a loose, inclusive Unionism. From the late 1860s, the *Londonderry Standard* had championed the cause of Liberal Presbyterians and supported disestablishment and tenant-right, but it had been consistently antipathetic to home rule.¹⁹³ It had dismissed the nascent nationalist movement of the early 1870s and in 1885 argued that home rule is a project to which all Protestants of every name are opposed'.¹⁹⁴ The Liberal Presbyterians could not unite with the nationalists. They were hostile to the Roman Catholic religion though they regarded the people as compatriots. Though they had a genuine sense of Irish patriotism, for them this was compatible with loyalty to Britain and Empire. The concept of Irish nationalism was rejected. In 1885-6, they also rejected Gladstone whom they had revered.¹⁹⁵

By 1885, Conservatives and Liberals were united in opposition to home rule. The disestablishment of the Church of Ireland had removed one major obstacle to

¹⁹² Thompson, *End of Liberal Ulster* p.275.

¹⁹³ Peatling 'Whatever happened to Presbyterian radicalism?', p.160.

¹⁹⁴ *Londonderry Standard*, 12 Nov. 1873; 9 Nov. 1885, Peatling 'Whatever happened to Presbyterian radicalism?', pp.161.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.160-61.

Protestant unity while land legislation had gone some way towards removing another, in that Liberals had to a great extent achieved their demands.¹⁹⁶ By depriving the tenant right movement of much of its potential as a political force, it undermined the Liberal dynamic for growth and opened the way towards traditional allegiances within Protestantism. The so-called Catholic invasion of the North in 1883 finally eclipsed the land question.¹⁹⁷

Westminster manoeuvred for the Irish vote and caused movement towards the Conservative Party. This was the party traditionally identified with support of the union and prepared to adopt a hard line to do so. In the general election, the situation confronting the parties was quite different from previous elections. The 1883-5 changes in the electoral system had transformed the political scene. Walker quotes Thomas MacKnight: 'The low franchise has given electoral power to all the agricultural labourers, who in Ulster are, among the Catholics, firm nationalists, and, among the Protestants, Orangemen.' Walker adds that in the changed political circumstances the Liberals 'were not regarded as relevant by the majority of the voters'.¹⁹⁸ A leading member of the Ulster Reform Club stated:

The Liberal party here has, for the time, disappeared as a factor in Ulster politics. While most of the leaders and the more intelligent followers remain true to the party, the great masses of the rank and file especially in the rural districts have gone over to the Tories; or rather forgetting old differences in face of what they consider the common danger, the masses of the two parties have amalgamated as Unionists.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁶ Thompson, *End of Liberal Ulster* p.293.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid, p.282.

¹⁹⁸ Walker, *Ulster Politics*, p.222.

¹⁹⁹ Thompson, *End of Liberal Ulster* p.294.

In the following months, the leaders joined the rank and file. In April 1886, at a meeting in the Ulster Hall, both parties, Conservative and Liberal decided to co-operate to oppose home rule. By 1886, the Liberal Party in Ulster was a spent force.²⁰⁰

William Alexander spoke against the Home Rule Bill in the Albert Hall in London in 1893.²⁰¹ He said, 'The voice which is protesting against the Bill is not alone the voice of Ulster, is not alone the voice of Protestantism, is not alone the voice of Episcopalians or Presbyterians; it is not the voice of Roman Catholics alone, it is the voice of civilized humanity in Ireland; it is the voice of trade; it is the voice of capital; it is the voice of intelligence; it is the voice of all that works and thinks.'²⁰² This reiterated the arguments made in his speech at the banquet given on the occasion of the bicentenary commemoration in Londonderry in December 1888.²⁰³ His eloquence spoke of a solidarity that was increasingly an aspect of Ulster politics and a conservatism that now defined the whole community rather than a section of it. This did not mean that the Liberal Presbyterian worldview suddenly took on a Conservative aspect. Conservatism may have been the predominant influence within emergent Unionism but the party also inherited Liberal activists and some of the Liberal ideology which tended to dilute the predominantly Orange aspect of Ulster Unionism.²⁰⁴ There had always been the potential for unity, as evinced by the Revival period, and this could be achieved when other aspects of the worldview did not militate against such union or when the issue concerned was of such magnitude that other divisions could be disregarded. With home rule, the

²⁰⁰ Ibid., p.295.

²⁰¹ *The Times*, 24 April 1893.

²⁰² Alexander, *Primate Alexander*, p.231.

²⁰³ LS, 20 Dec. 1888.

²⁰⁴ A. Jackson, *Ireland 1798-1998*, p.218.

issue involved was of such magnitude as to connect with all the evangelical worldviews.

Conclusion

In considering evangelicalism in Londonderry, there seems to be ambiguity about who exactly the evangelicals were. For example, McGovern sees the Conservatives involved in the siege culture as 'the evangelicals'. But there was also a definite role for the Presbyterian ministers and merchants who involved themselves in voluntary organisations but held themselves aloof from the siege commemorations.²⁰⁵ By trying to restrict the identity to a particular group, the picture remains out of focus because the definition of what exactly evangelical meant is not clear. Perhaps it would be more useful to regard the evangelical ethos as a culture which touched a variety of groups and its presence in Derry an indication of the diversity which would develop in twentieth-century evangelicalism which is said to resemble the variety of patterns in a kaleidoscope.²⁰⁶

There is a decidedly central role for the 'hard-line Conservatives' who laid definite claim to the label. It could also apply to the moderate Conservatives such as the Alexanders who did not regard themselves as evangelical but who were clearly instilled with evangelical principles. As mentioned earlier, evangelicals are often associated with the extremists at either end of the spectrum – extreme conservatives or radicals. However, this description does not fit the Liberal, postmillennial group any more than it does the moderate Alexanders. An evangelical role can be argued for them, active as they were in voluntarism and

²⁰⁵ *Derry Almanac*, 1862, pp. 94-5.

²⁰⁶ J. Wolfe, 'Evangelicals and Pentecostals; indigenizing a global gospel' in *Global Religious Movements in Regional Contexts*, ed. by J. Wolfe (Aldershot: Ashgate Publications, 2002), p.49.

their views were not particularly radical. As stated, Magee College, centre of political Liberalism, was quite orthodox in theology. In its Act of Origin and Statement of Present Conditions and Requirements, signed by William McClure and two others, it states that 'the General Assembly have appointment of all professors, no person being eligible to any chair who shall not sign the Westminster Confession of Faith'. The General Assembly, an evangelical body at this period, appointed Rev. William McClure as trustee in 1859. Their Revivalist enthusiasm, however, did not forge strong inter-denominational bonds, quite the reverse; after an initial flush of cross-denominational enthusiasm their energies were turned inward. The opening of the college in 1865 introduced another Liberal influence to join forces with the editor of the *Londonderry Standard*, James McKnight. A prolonged period of inter-Protestant rivalry was played out through the organs of opposing newspapers, the *Londonderry Standard* representing Liberal Protestantism and the *Londonderry Sentinel*, Conservative Protestantism. The debate often focussed on commemoration. The *Standard's* worldview celebrated the end of privilege and exclusion and looked forward to a better future for all Irish people and, though cherishing the memories of their ancestors, they felt it inappropriate to indulge in commemorative events which offended their neighbours. This drove sections of the community further apart.

The evangelical culture in Londonderry did not reflect a strong evangelical ethos that involved groups working in harmony for a common cause. In fact, there was evidence of strong opposing evangelical sub-cultures that indicated an element of cross denominational co-operation but also reflected division. This meant that there could be unity between Conservative Anglican and Conservative Presbyterian evangelicals on the issue of commemoration but, because of its

disruptive potential, Liberal Presbyterians were actively opposed to it. Despite a common denominator of doctrinal principles, provided by the Evangelical Alliance and which remained more theoretical than observable for the traditional Presbyterians, real unity was elusive. Some of the deepest divisions related to politics, explained in part by pre-millennial and post-millennial outlooks and to which evangelical fervour added much more than an edge. Pre-millennialism and covenantal beliefs were mutually reinforcing for Conservatives and contributed towards the drive to commemorate. A different view of covenantal obligations and a post-millennial outlook caused the Liberals to oppose this. For many, religious convictions were deep and genuine and anti-Catholicism was an aspect of religious fervour but it was also a characteristic of settler ideology and this would have been the main influence for the unchurched or nominal Protestants.

The crucial quality within evangelicalism was its activism. This catalytic influence provided the drive, stamina and passion which encouraged evangelicals to pursue the goals dictated by their worldview. This could drive sections of the community apart or unite them in alliance if they were sufficiently compatible. Issues like a revival could unite, especially in a period when Derry was a safe Conservative seat and there was a Conservative monopoly of power. Disestablishment allowed those with Conservative politics and premillennialist worldviews to work together across the denominations for a common goal but evangelical activism drove those with Liberal and postmillennial viewpoints in a different direction thus preventing unity. Thus Protestant unity, or 'Pan Protestantism' as Wright termed it,²⁰⁷ was conditional rather than constant and only rarely achieved, though the potential was there if divisive issues could be overcome. In effect, it took the ultimate threat of

²⁰⁷ Wright, *Two Lands on One Soil*, p.11.

home rule to unite all within Unionism which contained aspects of both major factions and was similarly instilled with evangelicalism.

CHAPTER THREE

The Worldview of the Commemorative Sermons

The scholarship on the Victorian sermon was, until relatively recently, driven by personality rather than sermon content, form or style. This was addressed in 1998 by R. H. Ellison who redirected the focus from biography to rhetorical analysis in *The Victorian Pulpit: Spoken and Written Sermons in Nineteenth-Century Britain*.¹ Here Ellison followed the non-biographical approach of H. A. Wichelns who inaugurated a new discipline of rhetorical criticism in 1925.² The field has expanded in recent years with contributions on nineteenth-century preaching from, for example, Victor Lams and David B. Chesebrough. Lams's *Newman's Anglican Georgic* and *Newman's Visionary Georgic* are crafted with a 'rhetorically coherent sequential structure'³, while Chesebrough, who contributes studies on Phillip Brooks, Charles G. Finney and Theodore Parker to the 'Great American Orators' series, concentrated on rhetorical theory and practice.⁴ Another significant contributor is O. C. Edwards in *A History of Preaching*, which surveys the sermon's evolution over two millennia of Christian history.⁵ J. N. Ian Dickson's *Beyond Religious Discourse: Sermons, Preaching and Evangelical Protestants in Nineteenth-Century Irish Society* can be located within the 'rhetorical analysis'

¹ R. H. Ellison, *The Victorian Pulpit* (London: Assoc. U.P., 1868).

² H. A. Wichelns, 'The Literary Criticism of Oratory' in *Methods of Rhetorical Criticism: A Twentieth-Century Perspective*, ed. by B. L. Brock and R. L. Scott (Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1980); *A New History of the Sermon: The Nineteenth Century*, ed. by R. H. Ellison, (Leiden: Brill, forthcoming, July 2010), pp.10, 11.

³ V. J. Lams, *Newman's Anglican Georgic* (New York: P. Lang, 2004); *Newman's Visionary Georgic* (New York: P. Lang, 2006).

⁴ D. B. Chesebrough, *Phillip Brooks* (London: Greenwood Press, 2001); *Charles g. Finney* (London, Greenwood Press, 2002); *Theodore Parker* (London: Greenwood Press, 1999); *New History of the Sermon*, ed. by Ellison, pp.12-13.

⁵ O. C. Edwards, *A History of Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2004).

tradition.⁶ He discusses the education of ministers, the cult of the pulpit personality, the impact on preaching of the Ulster Revival of 1859 and how preaching affects the lives of the wider community. He also isolates evangelical themes through the use of a database of 700 Episcopalian, Presbyterian and Methodist sermons. Ellison has edited a new work on the history of the sermon (forthcoming) following in the analytical trend set by Dickson and Edwards, examining the theories, theological issues and cultural developments that defined the nineteenth-century Anglo-American pulpit.⁷ The following chapter on commemorative sermons in Londonderry is also analytical.

While it is the content of the commemorative sermons that forms the focus of this chapter, their context and tradition must be established at the outset. As mentioned in Chapter One, commemorative sermons form part of the calendrical events (originally relating to England but drawn upon by Ireland as a way of establishing loyalty) that set aside certain days to mark Christian holidays and honour the Protestant monarch and the ordeals and deliverances experienced by the national church.⁸ These events were marked by the ringing of bells, holding of special church services, feasting, and drinking, as well as the bonfires and illuminations and other such demonstrations adopted by the common people. In Ireland they connected with the parading culture of Orangeism. However, it was not the popular element in either country that instigated the customs. These originated in the high politics of the day in Whitehall, Westminster and Dublin, and reached the local community 'through almanacs and sermons, precepts, proclamations, and unwritten instructions'.⁹ These events could be both unifying and divisive. For example, in the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods celebrated

⁶ Dickson, *Beyond Religious Discourse*.

⁷ *New History of the Sermon*, ed. by Ellison, p.15

⁸ David Cressy, 'The Protestant Calendar'; See Chapter 1, pp.57-8.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p.38.

events like the defeat of the Armada and the Gunpowder Plot united, but they were divisive during the Caroline period and Interregnum when competing calendrical emphases reflected the religious polarization of Arminians and Calvinists. These events were charged with religious and political significance and, as previously stated, were used to express identity.¹⁰ It is to establish the identity and worldview of those who commemorated the siege of Londonderry that the content of the Londonderry commemorative sermons are scrutinised.

Like Drew's sermon, discussed in Chapter One, these sermons belong to the 'discourses of use and instruction' which highlight the political and religious lessons to be learnt from the memory of extraordinary events.¹¹ These lessons could be used 'to laud established powers, to inveigh against rebellion, or to inaugurate and abet evangelical and political campaigns' and formed a part of Irish culture since the seventeenth century. In common with the English customs, the Irish ones reflected the 'common rejoicing of guns, bells, feasts and illuminations' and often resulted in violent encounters between Protestants and Roman Catholics.¹² Unlike the Battle of the Boyne, the Londonderry anniversaries had a place in the liturgical calendar as events worthy of public rejoicing. The lifting of the siege of Derry on 1 August (old calendar) became one of the dates commemorated (originally linked with the accession of George I) and in 1718 a flag was hoisted from the cathedral, a loyal sermon preached and a civic feast given in celebration. The local nature of the event raised its importance and eclipsed some of the other English festivals.¹³ Eventually, both the closing of the gates (18th December 1688, New Calendar, hereafter NC) and the raising of the siege on 12 August 1689 (NC) became important local events.

¹⁰ Ibid., p.32.

¹¹ T. C. Barnard, 'The Uses of 23 October 1641', p.889.

¹² Ibid., p.893.

¹³ Ibid., p.913-14.

In this thesis the particular combination of giving of thanks for divine favour, religious-political discourse, topical issues and historic events used in the sermons are analysed to reveal the values and beliefs of those participating in the events. Also particularly pertinent is the fact that the format was overlaid at that period by the evangelical religious-political tradition specific to Ulster. Preachers such as Henry Cooke and Thomas Drew believed it their duty to expound the principles of doctrine and politics from the pulpit, inter-relating the two.¹⁴ Evangelical values and how they interact with older beliefs are therefore at the core of the research. A further area of interest is a parallel trend in preaching that emerged in the United States with the development of a hybrid of political-religious oratory that subsequently found its place as the civic sermon. Frederick Douglass (c1818 – 1895) wove together the moral and political aspects of his worldview in his preaching, often blending public symbols and biblical traditions. This is best seen in his use of the jeremiad in his discourse revealing the existence of a cultural worldview that asserted an identity of a 'chosen people'.¹⁵ How these relate to the anniversary sermons in the blending of the civic, biblical, historical and evangelical elements is of specific interest.

Worldview Analysis

The sermons are explored using Smart's *Dimensions of the Sacred* as an analytic tool.¹⁶ Worldview analysis is a means of investigating ideologies, religious and secular, identifying values and beliefs and establishing how these are expressed in

¹⁴ See Chapter 1, pp.39-41; F. E. Scott, 'The Political Preaching Tradition in Ulster: Prelude to Paisley', *Western Speech Communication*, no. Fall (1976), p.250.

¹⁵ J. Evans, 'Sacred Rhetoric and The African-American Civic Sermon', in *New History of the Sermon*, ed. by Ellison, pp.639-652.

¹⁶ See introduction, pp.8-9. N. Smart, *Dimensions of the Sacred: An Anatomy of the World's Beliefs* (London: Harpur Collins, 1996).

action, laws, symbols and organisations. The eight aspects considered are ritual, material, doctrine, narrative, ethical, experiential and social and political/economic when combined, can provide a clear indication of how people perceived the world. The last category, a later addition to the schema,¹⁷ was used in the analysis as politics seemed particularly significant in the Ulster context and in the study of a loyalist order. Overall, it is an object to establish whether the worldview was secular or religious, or both. Examples that might illustrate religious and secular worldviews are Protestantism, and the nationalism of the United States of America.

Protestantism has a ritual dimension which is confined to worship and prayer, in line with the personal experience of grace and salvation exhibited in the worldview.¹⁸ The material element is a reinforcement of ritual and, at the period of the Reformation, it became reduced as pews and pulpits replaced the altar in importance and as church buildings became plainer.¹⁹ Doctrinally, the most important feature of Protestantism was its reliance on the authority of Scripture. Though its inerrancy was not articulated before the nineteenth century, a challenge at this point led to an intellectual crisis within Protestantism.²⁰ The narrative dimension is strongly related to the Old Testament which the Reformation brought to prominence by emphasising the direct confrontation between man and the power of God.²¹ The ethical dimension of Christianity was also re-emphasised in the Reformation. With emphasis on grace and predestination, man felt individually responsible for self-reform and the need to demonstrate, for his own peace of mind, the holiness and goodness of his life.

¹⁷ See introduction, p.9.

¹⁸ N. Smart, *The Religious Experience of Mankind* (New York: Fontana, 1977), p.592.

¹⁹ N. Smart, *Dimensions of the Sacred*, p.283.

²⁰ Smart, *The Religious Experience of Mankind*, p.595.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p.593.

Lay participation in Church affairs greatly increased, partly because of the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers.²² The experiential dimension relates to the inner experience of salvation and this developed at the expense of ritual. The Reformation reaffirmed this dimension by its focus on the Pauline experience of liberation from sin and redemption through Jesus Christ. The social dimension of Protestantism became more individualistic generally, though Geneva and Britain were exceptions as religion was more integrated into society. Man's more individual estimate of his place in society reflected the personal and individual confrontation between God and man.²³

Ritual, in the context of nationalism in the United States, consists of such practices as saluting the flag, singing the national anthem, the ceremonial duties of the president, and pilgrimages to national monuments. Wearing uniforms, and honouring past heroes such as presidents, poets, musicians and writers are also relevant to this dimension.²⁴ While the material dimension can refer to the physical environment, such as landscapes, it can also mean the memorials and buildings of Washington and other sacred spots including the battlefields of the Revolution and of the Civil War. The doctrinal dimension is expressed in the constitution which enshrines the values of a democratic society, and loyalty to these values is the mark of a genuine American citizen. Smart makes reference to the fact that, in the McCarthy era of the 1950s, a counter-doctrine (communism) became regarded as heresy.²⁵ The narrative dimension is the history of how the United States came into being, its pre-revolutionary history acting like an Old Testament. In later history, the Civil War has a significant role in the rituals of

²² Ibid., pp.594-95.

²³ Ibid., p.594.

²⁴ N. Smart, *Dimensions of the Sacred*, p.14.

²⁵ Ibid.

Memorial Day.²⁶ The experiential dimension is seen in the reaction to moving occasions, to the celebrations of patriotism and the singing of significant songs, the ethical in the Puritan ideals and the democratic and patriotic values of the nation. The social dimension refers to the deployment of the nation's institutions and the deployment of functionaries. Smart sees teachers as the priests of the nation, inducting the young in the national myth. The saints are the heroes and heroines, while other sacred people (in their role as protectors of the nation) are the military.²⁷ The visions, beliefs and agendas of a society could all be contained in the sermon and an analysis can reveal the preconceptions of the culture concerned.²⁸

The sermons in this chapter are analysed in the quest for similar insights not only about the nature of the Protestantism of those involved in the services but also the general outlook of those active in the commemorative culture. The social dimension, however, is not considered here but is explored in detail in the next chapter. The ritual of commemoration is covered in the final chapter but the ritual within the church service relating to the delivery of the sermon is considered below.

Ritual

The anniversary sermons were embedded in the church service of which they were the focal point. The context of the sermon depended on the denomination and where the service was held. In the plainer service in the First Presbyterian Church, for example, it was preceded by morning prayers and the lessons and

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ J. N. I. Dickson, *Beyond Religious Discourse*, p.1.

psalms. In the cathedral it was accompanied by morning prayers, lessons, litany, all encased in a musical programme which included a choir and the singing of psalms and hymns. However simple or elaborate the context might have been, the aim was to showcase the sermon. In December 1860, at the cathedral, the congregation sang a metrical version of Psalm 46, 'God is our refuge in distress'. Particular verses were selected for appropriateness, for example:

In tumults, when the heathen rag'd,
And kingdoms war against us wag'd,
He thundered and dispersed their pow'rs:
The Lord of Hosts conducts our arms,
Our tow'r of refuge in alarms,
Our fathers' guardian God and ours.

The text for this sermon was Psalm 33, the principles of which are national confidence, gratitude, and prosperity. It emphasises that righteousness exalts a nation and benefits a chosen people but the need remains to praise the Lord and acknowledge his favour.²⁹ Thus the themes of one psalm are set to blend into the other, building until the high point is reached with the delivery of the sermon. And from this high point, the themes cascade downwards, still discernible in the discourse of the secular part of the celebrations - the speeches and the toasts that attest the gratitude of the Derry people for the salvation of their ancestors in 1689 and their prosperity in the late nineteenth-century, whilst clearly displaying the faith and hope of a 'chosen people'.

In the period under review, 1859 – 1885, there was no evident correlation between denominations and choice of Old or New Testament texts. But it should be remembered that the practice of using Presbyterian churches stopped by the mid 1860s and thereafter Anglican ministers preached, albeit to a mixed Protestant congregation. Of the sixty-five texts chosen by the ministers, thirty-nine were Old

²⁹ LS, 21 Dec. 1860.

Testament texts.³⁰ This does not confirm the trend noted by Dickson for New Testament texts to take precedence in evangelical sermons in nineteenth-century Ulster.³¹

The texts chosen were all capable of being made applicable to the celebration of the day and to the relevance of the siege of 1688-9 and its implications. And this fitting of texts to the occasion was, according to Dickson, an aspect of evangelical preaching in that period.³² The texts chosen for the anniversaries, cited from newspapers as the primary source for information, related to the concept of a chosen people who had been tested and remained faithful. The Psalms were important additions to the narrative context as well as important in the ritual. They helped set the scene for the sermon. Psalms was the book most frequently used for the sermons with almost a third of the references coming from this section of the Bible. Psalm 44, v.1 was chosen three times:

We have heard with our ears O God,
Our fathers have told us
What you did in their days,
In days long ago.

Psalm 78, v.1-8 was chosen on three occasions also:

O my people hear my teaching...
Things we have heard and known
Things our fathers have told us.
We will not hide them from their children
We will tell the next generation.

The Book of Esther 9, v27-8 was chosen, again, four times:

The Jews took it upon themselves to establish the custom that they and their descendents and all who join them should without fail observe these two days every year in the way prescribed and at the time appointed. These days should be remembered and observed in every generation by

³⁰ More than one sermon was reported in the early 1860s. Moreover, in December 1868, Richard Babington chose three texts for his sermon.

³¹ Dickson, *Beyond Religious Discourse*, p.103.

³² *Ibid.*, p.76.

every family, and in every province and in every city. And these days of Purim should never cease to be celebrated by the Jews nor should the memory of them die out among their descendents.

The Gospels were only used on six occasions. A reading from the text of St. John's Gospel was quoted on three occasions; John 8, v.32, 'Ye shall know the truth and the truth will set you free', twice. Readings from St. Paul's Epistles occurred eleven times; from Romans and Galatians on three occasions; Peter, Corinthians and Philippians occurred twice. Old Testament texts predominated in the 1860s in the run up to disestablishment, seventeen compared with six in the later fifteen-year period. Preachers drew on its covenantal aspects and lent emphasis to the arguments for maintaining the status quo. Thereafter, the mix was nearer fifty per cent with New Testament texts slightly ahead. Within the latter set of texts, the Epistles of St. Paul featured significantly indicating St. Paul's importance in the evangelical worldview. It was also significant that, in the main, the themes of the New Testament texts blended with those chosen from the Old Testament. This range of texts was regularly invoked as part of the ritual of commemoration, highlighting and reinforcing by repetition the framework for the worldview established during this period of evangelical ascendancy.

The choice of texts reflected the important beliefs and values of the worldview. The greatest emphasis was placed on the importance of commemoration, a covenanted responsibility of a chosen people. However, there were variations in tone and emphasis over the period. For example, William McClure's (Presbyterian) text of Galatians 4, v.18 'It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing', chosen in August 1861, reflects the enthusiasm of the Revival period in the early 1860s. There was also a more urgent desire to encourage responsible behaviour in the early 1880s when politically the situation was at its

most threatening, and the implication was that Irish Protestants were the defeated party.³³ Psalm 4, v.4 'Stand in awe and sin not', Ephesians 4, v.26 'Be ye angry and sin not' Philippians 1, v.27 'Let your conversation be as becometh the Gospel of Christ', Mark 9, v.23 'All things are possible to him that believeth' were all texts chosen between 1880 and 1885.

Instead of following the established didactic format of introducing and explaining Scripture, the anniversary provided the framework for the sermon. Texts were chosen that could both relate to the occasion and the message that the preacher wished to convey. Preachers introduced a biblical text, provided historical and philological information that assisted interpretation, drew on the Bible generally to introduce evidence of divine inspiration associated with the passage, showed practical consequences that could be deduced from the passage (especially relating to Christian duties) and made the attempt to reach the emotions of the congregation by the use of vivid examples.³⁴ However, on these occasions certainly, preachers took matters a step further. They drew parallels between biblical events and secular history and with these mutually reinforcing examples deduced the appropriate behaviour to meet current situations. Based on a practice made acceptable by Knox, they suggested that contemporary Protestants should imitate the actions of biblical heroes, and their secular counterparts, because the God of biblical times had not changed and required the same obedience.³⁵ In December 1864, James Crawford (Presbyterian) in the Strand Presbyterian Church, referred to the Hebrew youths and their refusal to bow before the image of the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar and drew a parallel between their situation and that of those besieged in Londonderry. God's providence was earned by their

³³ See Chapter 4, p. 255-6; *LS*, 20 Dec. 1884.

³⁴ C. Poster, 'Richard Whately and the Didactic Sermon', in *New History of the Sermon*, ed. by Ellison, p.157.

³⁵ M. A. MacIver, 'Ian Paisley and the Reformed Tradition', *Political Studies*, (XXXV 1987) p.363.

sacrifice. He referred to current circumstances, when the right to commemorate was challenged by other sections of the community, and told the congregation to remember their noble aim of giving thanks and to 'stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith God has set you free and be not entangled again in the yoke of bondage'.³⁶

In December 1868, Richard Babington (Anglican) compared the providence shown to the Israelites in Egypt and at the Red Sea with that shown in Londonderry to those under siege. The benefits of civil and religious liberty were won by the steadfastness of the besieged, he believed. He said 'To turn from the past to the present – to turn from what took place then to what is going on around us now (referring to disestablishment of the Irish church) – we behold these very rights and privileges which then cost so much blood to gain, in danger of being wrenched from us.'³⁷ Though this hermeneutical approach originated from the Presbyterian tradition, it was one that was clearly embraced by both churches.

A theme which resonated throughout the commemorative sermons which was particularly applicable to the ritual dimension was the importance of appropriately commemorating the siege. Rev. Richard Smyth (Presbyterian) in August 1860 told his congregation that they should never rise above the recollections of glorious conflicts that have become incorporated with liberties.³⁸ The emphasis was generally that memories must be kept alive for future generations who might have to take up the fight.³⁹ This was supported by William McClure (Presbyterian) who said that their ancestors had striven for a free Bible and a pure faith and they

³⁶ LS, 16 Aug. 1864; Galatians 5:1.

³⁷ LS, 22 Dec. 1868.

³⁸ Richard Smyth, LS, 17 Aug. 1860.

³⁹ William Craig (Anglican), LS, 17 Aug. 1860.

must uphold the standard they had raised.⁴⁰ In December 1861, William Craig (Anglican) stated that the celebrations did not feed their human vanity because victory was attributed to God. However, he saw the procession as vital to Derry and to Protestantism. He equated the idea of refraining from marching with that of giving up all that might offend, namely the Bible, churches and the Protestant faith.⁴¹ This argument was developed by Richard Babington (Anglican) who stated that on different occasions 'the Almighty instituted memorials for the purpose of perpetuating remembrance of his mercies and transmitting them to further generations'. He drew parallels with the commemorations of the Passover, crossing the Jordan and overthrowing Canaan and added that commemorations were a means of reviving spirits and renewing faith.⁴² This theme was continued throughout the 1870s and 1880s.⁴³ However, during the period between 1859 and 1885, there were undercurrents within the evangelical community, and wider community, which re-defined the physical context for the sermons.

The necessity of commemorating the siege, and the nature of that commemoration were issues that were hotly disputed. Although Smyth and McClure gave anniversary sermons in the early 1860s, and their comments seem in line with their Anglican counterparts, by the mid 1860s, the Liberal Presbyterians were distancing themselves from the Conservatives adopting the view that the celebrations should be limited to the church service and public display avoided. This indicates a different conception of commemoration, to an extent influenced by eschatology.⁴⁴ Much of the battle was conducted through the articles of the *Londonderry Standard* and *Londonderry Sentinel*, the Liberal and Conservative

⁴⁰ LS, 16 Aug. 1861.

⁴¹ Ibid., 20 Dec. 1861.

⁴² Ibid., 22 Dec. 1868.

⁴³ Ibid., 19 Dec. 1878, 20 Dec. 1883.

⁴⁴ See Chapter 2, pp.145.

newspapers. Though the former had Walker's Column as its crest indicating its recognition of Derry's past, Liberal Presbyterians supported Roman Catholics who suggested that the secular elements of the celebrations should be stopped. This was in the period when excursions were coming from other towns in the North and the celebrations were no longer purely a local event.⁴⁵ The Liberal aim was to avoid sectarian conflict. They believed that by allowing concessions to Roman Catholics, everyone could unite in efforts for the common good. This was the rationale in disestablishment; if all churches were on a par then there would be no need for resentment and Ireland could look to a better future. However, for those closely concerned with commemoration, such as members of the Loyalist Orders and Conservative clergy, one of the main reasons for celebrating the siege was to pay tribute to the strong-mindedness of their forebears and, for them, concessions to error were errors themselves.

Reaction to the Liberal stance was seen in the December 1864 sermon given by the Dean of the cathedral, Rev. Hugh Usher Tighe. Taking as his text, 1st Chronicles xvi.7 'then on that day David delivered first this psalm, to thank the Lord, into the hands of Asaph and his brethren', he spoke about the necessity of giving appropriate thanks for mercy received. He described the elaborate ceremonial introduced by David and referred to the Lord's covenant with Abraham 'unto thee, I will give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance'. He asked if it were not equally necessary for his congregation to give thanks for their gains. 'Shall we not endeavour to direct the observance of our people to the wonderful and overruling works of God in the maintenance of our true religion.' He spoke of the value of the Reformation, the privileged role of Britain as a result of fostering Protestantism and God's providence in saving the people of Londonderry in the

⁴⁵ *Inquiry, Londonderry*, min. 5584.

siege. Had Britain not stood against 'Popish tyranny' and 'thralldom', he stated, it would never have achieved the pre-eminence it now enjoyed. The importance of giving thanks was, for him, vital. He quoted from Macaulay's history of Britain:

It is a sentiment which belongs to a higher and purer part of human nature, and which adds not a little to the strength of States. A people which takes no pride in the noble achievements of remote ancestors will never achieve anything worthy to be remembered with pride by remote descendants.⁴⁶

He added that he hoped that this would not be the case in Londonderry as not only Britain but the Empire owed its prominence to the sacrifice of the people of Londonderry who deserved their remembrance. The behaviour of participants, however, had to be impeccable. Here Tighe was applying the hermeneutical approach to secular history as well as sacred, using the Reformation tradition, generally associated with Presbyterianism, of supplementing Scriptural precedents with secular historical evidence.⁴⁷

This was also evident in Babington's discourse in August 1870. On this occasion, Babington told the congregation that it was their duty to commemorate. He said that God's intervention in the siege was as evident as in any of the deliverances of the children of Israel and, since he expected commemorative ceremonies from them, so he would expect them from the people of Derry. As the seventies progressed, the same message about the importance of commemoration was emphasised with the warning that the behaviour of those taking part was under scrutiny. With eyes focussed on Derry because of intermittent rioting, efforts were made to encourage the Apprentice Boys to behave impeccably.⁴⁸ Babington, active in the Orange Order and tireless in his efforts in the temperance movement, stressed that while it was their duty to commemorate, the Apprentice Boys must

⁴⁶ Thomas Macaulay, B., *The History of England: from the accession of James II* (Longman, Brown, 1858), III, pp. 540-1.

⁴⁷ See p.183.

⁴⁸ Edward G. Dougherty, *LS*, 20 Dec. 1883; Charles Crookshank, *LS*, 19 Dec. 1878.

conduct themselves appropriately.⁴⁹ Babington was one of the chaplains to the Apprentice Boys from 1868, and it was clear that his conception of commemoration was linked to Biblical precedent. That this conception of commemoration was accepted as part of the Apprentice Boys' worldview is confirmed by its presence in the secular part of the commemorative event. In December 1877, Rev. Robert Donnell (Presbyterian) fused together the upholding of bible faith with walking the walls, supporting civil and religious principles and attending the cathedral. This view was upheld by the Governor of the Apprentice Boys, John Guy Ferguson (Anglican), who stated that he had noticed depleted numbers attending the cathedral and did not expect this to happen again. For him, if not for the whole company, the religious element was crucial.

Far from being simply an ephemeral event, the sermon remained 'alive' after the service was over. In the subsequent meetings at Corporation Hall, for example, the preacher was thanked and comment often made about the content of the sermon. In 1875, Robert C. Donnell (Presbyterian) found it necessary to go beyond the usual descriptions 'eloquent' or 'appropriate' and his comments give insight into the compatible and evangelical mindset within the congregation. He thanked the Bishop for his philosophical sermon that, he stated, was also a theological discourse. Donnell stated that he could appreciate the points made about what Alexander referred to as 'creationism' and was in agreement. Such discourse was unusual in that context and most likely reflected a moment in the nineteenth-century debate on evolution. Generally the sermons were more readily attributable to the anniversary occasion and were aimed at a mixed denominational congregation. However, Alexander linked the sermon to the siege by focussing on the pietistic acceptance of Bishop Hopkins during the siege. This,

⁴⁹ LS, 21 Dec. 1880.

he stated, was the result of the Calvinistic outlook away from which his own church had evolved. It now believed, he stated, in the validity of man's hand in his own destiny. Donnell stated that though he was Calvinist himself, he could still relate to the point Alexander was making because his Calvinism was evangelical, meaning that it was active. He explained that he did not expect to gain heaven by the path that led to hell. Christianity, he believed, should be demonstrated by taking Christ's life as a pattern.⁵⁰ His speech showed cross-denominational solidarity.

Similarly, in the evening soirees after the December events, reference was often made to the preacher, comment made as to content of the sermon, themes discussed and formal thanks offered on behalf of the Apprentice Boys' organisation. In December 1868, comment was made on a more typical sermon, one which was described as 'an eloquent, appropriate Gospel sermon'.⁵¹ The anniversary preacher was Richard Babington (now chaplain of one of the clubs) who was taking up the fight against disestablishment of the Church of Ireland and his Conservative Presbyterian fellow members were giving full support.

The sermon was important, not only in reflecting, shaping and giving legitimacy to the views of the Apprentice Boys but in reaching beyond the congregation to the wider Protestant population. This religious dimension to the celebrations was regarded as worthy of note across Ulster. In the newspaper coverage of the events of the day, the sermon was reported, often in full, not only in the *Londonderry Sentinel* (the Conservative newspaper likely to give most detailed coverage) and the *Londonderry Standard* (Presbyterian) but also in the *Belfast News-Letter*. When more than one service took place, as was the case in the

⁵⁰ Ibid., 21 Dec. 1875.

⁵¹ Rev. R. C. Donnell (Presbyterian), *LS*, 22 Dec. 1868.

1850s and early 1860s, an effort was made to give good coverage to the one(s) best attended and at least a précis of the others. There were occasions, also, when the sermons were published separately on the request of the congregation, as in the case of Rev. W. Beresford's *A citizen of no mean city* preached at the cathedral at the December commemoration in 1859 and Rev. J. Crawford's *Alleluia*, preached at the Strand Road Presbyterian Church at the August 1864 commemoration. Some sermons were 'best sellers'. For example, Richard Smyth's sermon on the advance of Protestantism in Ireland and Italy, delivered at the August anniversary in 1860, proved particularly popular. Over a thousand copies were initially printed and they sold out within a couple of days. A second edition had to be published.⁵²

During this period, commemoration became associated with hard-line Conservatism, political and theological. However, with the introduction of first Buttite (1870s) and then Parnellite home rule (1880s), the Liberal and Roman Catholic alliance broke apart. Roman Catholics gave their support to home rule candidates but for Liberals, a future that involved the Roman Catholics governing themselves was a step too far.⁵³ Commemoration, at this point, became less divisive among Protestants. There were also some who were moderate Conservatives but on the topic of commemoration differed and who, as the 1880s progressed, gave up the middle ground. Canon O'Hara, in December 1889, said

The time was when I thought that celebrations such as those we are today engaged in had better be discontinued, and that the memories of a bitter and angry past should be allowed to pass away – noble and heroic though those memories are. But the memories of the past few years have made me, and I believe many others with me, change our minds on this point, not without some regret.⁵⁴

⁵² *Londonderry Standard*, 16 Aug. 1860; R. Smyth, *Ireland and Italy: A Sermon, Preached in the First Presbyterian Church, Londonderry on Twelfth of August, 1860, Being the Anniversary of the Relief of Derry* (Derry, 1860).

⁵³ G. Peatling, 'Whatever happened to Presbyterian radicalism?', p. 163.

⁵⁴ *LS*, 19 Dec. 1889.

Commemoration for these groups obviously did not have the same significance as for more hard-line Conservatives, but the political realignment meant less need for objection and perhaps the perceived need for a joint political expression as it was incorporated into Unionism.

For the Apprentice Boys, commemoration was the point of their existence as an organisation. From their perception, siege mythology⁵⁵ meant that Protestants banded together, concessions were not considered, the walls held and God delivered His faithful. These principles, backed by a perceived historic deliverance in the tradition of biblical precedent, could be used to justify intractable moral and political stands. Commemoration was religio-political in that the political stance was an extension of evangelical morality. Such observation fulfilled a duty to show strength of opposition to Roman Catholicism and support of Protestantism. For evangelicals, commemoration was an important demonstration for the Protestant populace rather than a licence to taunt Roman Catholics and mark out territory. It was to uplift spirits and 'to thank God for freedom from Popish repression'.⁵⁶

Material

The material dimension complemented ritual, the cathedral itself representing the continuity between worship during the siege and commemorations of the mid nineteenth century. It was a symbol of the Protestant unity acclaimed from the pulpit since it had sheltered the victims of the siege, both Episcopalian and Presbyterian. Set within the walls whose gates were closed against the Roman

⁵⁵ See Chapter 5, pp.290-1.

⁵⁶ LS, 14 Aug. 1879, Speeches. A detailed analysis of the ritual ceremonies of the commemorative anniversaries is provided in Chapter 5.

Catholic enemy, it represented evangelical activism. It was also a symbol of the religio-political motivation of those involved illustrated by the captured silk flags housed in the chancel and the corbel and window honouring Governor Walker, the warrior priest. The anniversary preachers, both Presbyterian and Anglican, referred to the significance of the edifice.⁵⁷ Its stone walls provided a strong foundation for the rhetoric from the pulpit.

Doctrine

The sermons delivered on these anniversary occasions differed from average Sunday discourse which could be either evangelical or denominational, or both, though by mid century there was a 'common platform with common primary doctrines and aims' and preaching tended to reflect this.⁵⁸ William Alexander remarked 'rhetorical eloquence was the ideal for the preacher and carefully written and thought out composition delivered with a dry manner and in even tones did not receive its due.'⁵⁹ Evangelical sermons would reflect the core doctrines of inerrancy of Scripture, original sin, efficacy of the cross and the deity of Christ. These doctrines were regarded as essential for saving souls and formed the basis of an 'inter-denominational platform within Protestantism' that centred on an agreed perception of sin, forgiveness through Christ and personal conversion.⁶⁰

The anniversary sermons, moreover, were for a mixed Protestant congregation so concentrating on core doctrines would be the norm. The epistles of St. Paul made up twenty percent of the texts. For example, in August 1861 William McClure (Presbyterian) used the epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians as his text. The

⁵⁷ LS, 17 Aug. 1860, 14 Aug. 1863, 21 Dec. 1875.

⁵⁸ Dickson, *Beyond Religious Discourse*, p.66.

⁵⁹ Alexander, *Primate Alexander*, p.212-13; See Chapter 2, p.135.

⁶⁰ Dickson, *Beyond Religious Discourse*, p.66.

emphasis of the sermon, however, was on the God of Love.⁶¹ This reflected McClure's postmillennial eschatology. The God generally referred to in the sermons was the more severe God of the covenant and of wrath and justice. McClure, however, stressed the God of compassion, the God of dialogue and reconciliation, and God the Son. William Alexander gave his view on the different perceptions quite clearly in 1881. He said 'Some speak as if God had no attributes at all but simple benevolence. This is mawkish jargon: it is utterly false so to present God's moral government which in many respects is beyond question severe. When we turn to our Bible and to prophecy, we find that through history and prophecy there runs one dark thread, there sounds one awful phrase – the wrath of God.'⁶²

McClure gave his sermon in the aftermath of the Revival when there was more accommodation between the First Presbyterian Church and the cathedral and the ministers were prepared to house the Apprentice Boys' congregation. By the mid sixties, this co-operation had broken down as a result of the more Conservative direction taken by the Apprentice Boys. Liberals active in the Association, such as John Hempton, a leader of the organisation in the fifties and early sixties, left or were forced out.⁶³ From this point, though the congregation remained mixed and common doctrines rather than denominational ones continued to be the norm, it was the more pessimistic outlook associated with premillennialism that emanated from the pulpit and which resonated with the realigned congregation of Conservative Anglicans and Presbyterians.

⁶¹ LS, 16 Aug. 1861.

⁶² Ibid., 20 Dec. 1881.

⁶³ *Inquiry, Londonderry*, min. 818, T. G. Fraser, 'The Siege', p.395.

Eschatology was important. It had a significant effect on how people viewed the world. Herman's paper on the effect of premillennialism on outlook in present day America illustrates this.⁶⁴ The politically Liberal Presbyterians were conservative theologically. This was illustrated by William McClure, a leading Liberal, in August 1861 when he stated that they must not 'give in to the liberality which suggests one religion is as good as another'. However, there was still a significant difference between this group and the political Conservatives who also held theologically conservative views. Political differences, however, illustrated rather than caused their divergence. Post-millennial in outlook, they could embrace a greater amount of change and were prepared to compromise for their perception of the greater good. This was not to say that Conservative Presbyterians and Anglicans did not believe in social reform. As evangelicals such reform was a duty. However any accommodation of Rome was perceived as disobeying the rules laid down by God and was to be resisted.⁶⁵ Real Protestantism, in the view of the Conservative, set the Bible above all human opinion and did not approve of anything that was 'not according to the laws and testimony'.⁶⁶ Both groups felt obliged to pursue their course in the political arena.

The theme of the covenant was woven into the fabric of the worldview of both groups but the Liberal group saw Ulster Presbyterians as the 'chosen people' while Conservative Presbyterians and Anglicans considered a united band of Protestants as the ideal.⁶⁷ For the Conservatives, although grace was freely given, the idea of covenant meant that there were strings attached. They regarded interaction with Rome as breaking the covenant. Both the covenant and

⁶⁴ D. Herman, 'The New Roman Empire: European Envisionings and American Premillennialists', *Journal of American Studies*, 34, no. 1 (2000), pp.23-40.

⁶⁵ A. Thomson, *Fields of Vision: faith and identity in Protestant Ireland*. (Belfast: Centre for Contemporary Christianity in Ireland, ECONI, 2002), p.85.

⁶⁶ R. C. Donnell (Presbyterian), Speeches, 21 Dec. 1866.

⁶⁷ See Chapter 2, pp.143-4; LS, 19 Dec. 1889, Speeches, T. Ballantine.

God's justice are foundational in the Bible and to Anglican and Presbyterian doctrine. Used as part of a framework through which to view the world, they helped shape the perspective not only of religious conviction but matters of state governance.

Conservative Protestants saw the people of Derry (as indicated by God's intervention in the siege), as well as Britain generally, as a chosen people and regarded themselves as in a covenantal relationship with God maintaining the Protestant stance against Roman Catholicism and error while maintaining faith in God's guidance and their deliverance in troubled times. In most sermons there is a reference to Israel or David or the plight of the Israelites, and parallels are drawn between the 'chosen people' of the Bible and the people of the historical siege of Derry and their descendants. The references to a covenanted God, explicit or implicit, are numerous. Francis Smith (Anglican) talked of the necessity of working with Christ and discharging the duties of the Christian covenant. He emphasised that the secret of national greatness rested on the mercy of a covenanted God.⁶⁸ In August 1868, Bishop Alexander charged his congregation not to suppose that the Lord of the Old Testament had surrendered the option of direct action to the princes of the world. Direct communication between the God of the covenant and his people was a reality.⁶⁹ Samuel Cochrane (Anglican) told the congregation that constant reliance on the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit was all that was necessary to receive God's favour – they had it by purchase, inheritance and privilege.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Psalm 33, verse 22, *'Let thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us according as we hope in Thee'*, LS, 21 Dec. 1860.

⁶⁹ Psalm 24, verses 7-10, *Lift up your heads, O ye gate and the Son of Glory shall come in'*, LS, 14 Aug. 1868.

⁷⁰ Revelation, 3, verse 8, *'I know thy works; I have set before thee and open door, and no man can shut it'*, LS 14 Aug. 1880.

William Beresford (Anglican) set the peace won at the siege of Derry within the biblical context of that following David's victory against the Philistines.⁷¹ This was reinforced by William McClure (Presbyterian), who in August 1859 spoke of blessings - purchased by fathers in the siege - that had descended to the children, and spoke of the 'sacred dust of their fathers beneath their feet'.⁷² William Craig (Anglican) referred to the 'sacred cathedral roof where our fathers met and prayed'.⁷³ Craig claimed the relief of the siege was an illustration of God delivering his people.⁷⁴ In December 1868, in the secular element of the commemoration, R. C. Donnell (Presbyterian) referred to the Liberals forgetting their duty to the covenant.⁷⁵ Thus the theme of covenant was strong and crossed denomination.

Ideas of covenant bound Conservative Anglicans and Presbyterians together though these ideas originally derived from John Knox and the Presbyterian tradition.⁷⁶ There was clearly cross-fertilisation. Reid stated that in the early years of settlement in Ulster, the Established Church accommodated the influx of Scottish Presbyterians by inducting Presbyterian clergymen into Anglican benefices - although this trend came to an end with Archbishop Laud.⁷⁷ Nonetheless, the Church of Ireland was deeply influenced in its doctrine and liturgy by Calvinism. As a result, it became 'notably austere by Anglican standards'.⁷⁸ This Calvinising element can be seen in Bishop Alexander's reference to common bonds. He asserted that the Church of Ireland members besieged in 1688 were 'stout Puritans' and 'true Churchmen' who could pray as

⁷¹ LS, 19 Aug. 1859.

⁷² Ibid., 19 Aug. 1859.

⁷³ Ibid., 16 Aug. 1861.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 20 Dec. 1860.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 22 Dec. 1868.

⁷⁶ MacIver, 'Ian Paisley', p.368.

⁷⁷ J. S. Reid, *History of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland*, 3 vols (Belfast: William Mullen, 1867), 1 pp.96-105.

⁷⁸ D. H. Akenson, *God's Peoples*, p.114.

well as fight, thus having much in common with their Presbyterian brethren.⁷⁹ The Bishop also spoke of history's ill usage of Bishop Hopkins who had remonstrated with the Apprentice Boys when they wished to resist King James II in 1688. Alexander said that Hopkins was 'Calvinistic and evangelical to the core' but the Low Church bishop had held conscientiously to the doctrine of passive obedience which was 'now commonly associated with a different theology'.⁸⁰ Fulfilling the covenant meant recognising the religious implications of political decisions. This was made clear by Babington's (Anglican) 1868 sermon which paid tribute to the late Henry Cooke who had foreseen the implications of disestablishment. Cooke, he suggested, was an inspirational figure not only within his own church but for the whole country.⁸¹

D. H. Akenson discusses the centrality of the covenant in Ulster-Scots' culture in his work, *God's Peoples: Covenant and Land in South Africa, Israel and Ulster*. He refers to the 'spin' given to Calvinistic ideas by a set of religio-political ideas resulting in a hybrid which could be described as a 'covenant of works'. This meant that righteous actions were a requirement in 'the social and political realm as well as in the religious world, and these actions volitionally defined the relationship of God and man'.⁸² This does appear to define the outlook of the Conservative evangelical. Miller regarded the 'covenant of works' as ultimately responsible for the closing of the gates of Derry. The theory of political obligation and the practice of, and need for, public banding (banding together of Protestants for mutual protection) united the Protestants on that occasion.⁸³

⁷⁹ LS, 14 Aug. 1868.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 21 Dec. 1875.

⁸¹ Ibid., 22 Dec 1868.

⁸² Akenson, *God's Peoples*, p.114-5.

⁸³ D. Miller, *Queen's Rebels*, p.23.

Akenson suggests that following the 1859 Revival, the Presbyterian covenantal mindset was diffused throughout Ulster and other Protestant denominations came under its influence. That is why, in 1912, he asserted, the concept of the Ulster Solemn League and Covenant resonated with the whole Protestant population.⁸⁴ However, the evidence above would suggest that by 1859 the idea of the covenant was already well established in the Church of Ireland. As early as 1849, George Smith (Anglican) had preached on the Christian covenant, emphasising its superiority to that of Israel and illustrating the sacred nature of the bond which existed between Ulster Protestants and God and the balance of liberties and duties.⁸⁵ This meant the existence of a pact with God and as long as these duties were observed, all would be well. In December 1869, Thomas Lucas Scott spoke about demonstrating 'loyalty' to God.⁸⁶ One of the duties that Conservative Anglicans and Presbyterians felt they were fulfilling was that of commemoration. The popular parading side, as well as the church service, resented though it might be by other sections of the community, was part of the requirements as far as the Apprentice Boys, and those who supported them, were concerned. Their rites had developed from a form of folk-religion that was connected to official religion but did not form a part of it. In preserving political Protestantism they were also endorsing its religious status and fulfilling a perceived covenantal role. Without official religious guidelines, the wider ceremony had its own dynamic but Church endorsement was evident from the fact that the church service was encased in this popular commemoration. The common perception, in Anglicanism and Conservative Presbyterianism, of what God required of them was crucial in enabling elements of the community to unite successfully. That this concept had influence beyond the church service was indicated by the *Sentinel's* editorial in

⁸⁴ Akenson, *God's Peoples*, p.149

⁸⁵ *LS*, 17 Aug. 1849.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 20 Dec. 1869.

August 1858 which stated that commemorating was a sacred duty and fulfilling it would result in God coming to their aid as He had to the aid of their forefathers.⁸⁷

Protestant unity was another central theme. In December 1861 William Craig encouraged his congregation to live in love and peace with those who worshipped the same God and Saviour and the same Scripture as themselves. He said that they might differ in little matters, or matters of church discipline or government, but they shared one faith, baptism and God. He said 'be united; in disunion our weakness lies'.⁸⁸ Hugh Hanna, at the Strand Presbyterian Church, constructed his sermon around the theme of Protestant unity.⁸⁹ In 1868, William Alexander, to a mixed Protestant congregation, encouraged unity by alluding to a common historical base - the early tendency towards the Low Church in church government at the time of the siege and to their mutual puritan ancestors who achieved great things by working together.⁹⁰ This common heritage was reinforced by Rev. R. A. Baillie in his sermon in 1874.⁹¹ Its theological basis was referred to by Richard Babington as reflecting the perfect state of Protestant unity that would exist in the afterlife.⁹²

This unity, achieved during the siege, was regularly regarded in the anniversary sermons as the ideal state which attracted God's favour. Richard Babington begged his congregation to remember the common Protestantism of the days of the siege when Anglicans and Presbyterians stood together and to take heed of Dr. Henry Cooke's advice and unite in a period when rights and privileges won by

⁸⁷ Ibid., 13 Aug. 1858.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 20 Dec. 1861.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 14 Aug. 1863.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 14 Aug. 1868.

⁹¹ Ibid., 19 Dec. 1874.

⁹² Ibid., 16 Aug. 1870.

God's hand in the past were in danger of being lost.⁹³ There were some calls for unity, however, that did not provide the required response. William Alexander, reflecting the controversy in England over ritualism, asked for toleration for the High Churchmen in the Church of Ireland emphasising that toleration within the Church did no disservice to anyone.⁹⁴ This was not something that was well received by the congregation who were totally opposed to ritualism.⁹⁵ In August 1880, feeling under pressure by Parnellite home rule, Samuel Cochrane drew parallels with the citizens of Philadelphia who, living up to their name which meant brotherly love, 'banded' together to die for the truth.⁹⁶

Unity was also an evangelical prerequisite. In the celebrations commemorating the siege, there was a combination of evangelical Anglicans and Dissenters in the congregations and, for the most part, Dissenters outnumbered the former.⁹⁷ James Crawford (Presbyterian) in August 1864 said that while they could not make light of the differences between churches, there was no need to quarrel. Protestants needed to unite to meet the enemy waiting to destroy them (Roman Catholicism).⁹⁸ References to their success in working together in the siege were both implicit and explicit and occurred with some urgency in the run up to disestablishment when the Anglicans felt they needed Presbyterian support. This was reflected in the secular event by Richard Babington (August 1868) and Robert Donnell (December 1868) who spoke about the united Protestantism reflected in the Apprentice Boys' Association.⁹⁹ There was also representation from other churches. In the secular event in December 1865, Wesleyan minister James

⁹³ Ibid., 22 Dec. 1868.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 14 Dec. 1873.

⁹⁵ Alexander, *Primate Alexander*, p.261.

⁹⁶ LS, 14 Aug. 1880.

⁹⁷ *Inquiry, Londonderry*, min. 5977.

⁹⁸ LS, 16 Aug. 1864.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 14 Aug. 1868, 18 Dec. 1868.

Greer demonstrated his solidarity with other Protestants by raising a toast and in August 1875, Mr. McDade, Methodist minister, said that it was not only Episcopalians and Presbyterians that appreciated the occasion.¹⁰⁰

There is evidence of disunity within the Apprentice Boys' organisation during the 1860s, mainly within Presbyterianism.¹⁰¹ Indications are that there was a stronger Conservatizing influence at work and Liberals formerly comfortably within its boundaries found their principles could no longer be accommodated. For the Conservatives, conscious of the fact that Protestants were significantly outnumbered in Ireland generally, the necessity to pull together for a common goal was vital. There was little time for toleration of those who took the more Liberal view, especially when the political outlook was threatening. It was their belief that it was the duty of all Protestants to unite their efforts for the common good. In failing to comply, Liberals were called Lundies (siege terminology for traitors). In 1889, when the Liberal force was spent in Derry, religious unity was re-evaluated. Religious controversies that had divided earlier in the century, necessary though they might have seemed at the time, were regarded as the source of some of Satan's greatest triumphs. The Biblical allusion of unity of spirit in the bond of peace was believed to be the greatest triumph which should be most sought.¹⁰²

Narrative

There were two narratives which had particular significance in the worldview, the narratives associated with the Bible and the siege of Derry. These were united in the sermons. The interplay of the dual narratives was crucial. The Old Testament

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 19 Dec. 1865, 14 Aug. 1875.

¹⁰¹ *Inquiry, Londonderry*, min.818.

¹⁰² *LS*, 19 Dec. 1889.

narratives which are referred to most frequently are the covenants – God's promise to Abraham (Genesis 12. v.12), its further development at Sinai (Exodus 19, v.36-7 and Leviticus 18, v.24-8) and the covenant with David (2 Samuel 7). These covenants set all embracing guidelines that, if followed, would allow nations to flourish. But the context in which they were raised in the sermons was generally through the illumination of St. Paul's Epistles. Here Paul emphasises that the Christian covenant is superior to that under which the Israelites lived.¹⁰³ In 1849 Rev. George Smith pointed out that in Galatians v.1, Paul shows how Christians are the true children of Abraham and heirs to the 'promise' of nationhood and blessings. There was considerable concentration on gaining freedom, common to both Biblical and historic narratives. Christians were the children of the 'free' woman Sarah, as opposed the bondswoman Hagar whose children were the Jews, and 'must stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ had set them free'. Emphasis was placed on the fact that Derry people had been 'chosen' by God for special favour. 'If the Jewish people were given special regard and the smallest matter noted by God, we can claim an equal if not greater regard'. The freedoms which allowed Christians to act according to reason and conscience were reinforced by that of the Gospel which gave man a new direction 'setting him free'.¹⁰⁴

These biblical narratives blended into the historic account of the siege in the sermons. They were regarded as providing similar lessons. George Smith linked the siege to other struggles within the history of Protestantism. He explained that the Reformation was the result of the infringement of the liberties and rights of the Church. The Papacy, he believed, had been claiming rights which had no basis in

¹⁰³ Rev. G. Smith, LS 17 Aug. 1849.

¹⁰⁴ LS, 17 Aug. 1849.

Scripture so defending freedom was necessary. The religious and civil liberties of the 1688 Revolution were granted by a God pleased that Protestant Britain was honouring the covenant. The siege of Derry was a situation whereby God directly intervened to save 'a chosen people'; their descendants would also benefit if they remained strong in their faith.¹⁰⁵ Those who had died were martyrs of the Revolution, those who survived heroes, and by their sacrifice blessings had been purchased for their children.¹⁰⁶ In August 1864, James Crawford (Presbyterian) gave a sermon linking biblical events and the siege. At the secular event that December, he gave a speech that drew a line from biblical events, through the Reformation and to the siege.¹⁰⁷ In December 1864, Hugh Tighe (Anglican) linked biblical events with Reformation history and the siege, quoting Macaulay.¹⁰⁸

There were various historic accounts of the siege but the one most favoured by preachers¹⁰⁹ was Macaulay's *History of England from the Accession of James the Second* (1848-55).¹¹⁰ It gave Ulster Protestants 'a central place in the myth of the unfolding of the British constitution' and in the struggle for religious and civil liberties.¹¹¹ King William was the hero of Macaulay's work because of his achievements in establishing the correct balance between crown and parliament.¹¹² The historian's vivid description of the siege of Derry greatly strengthened the emotive links between Great Britain and Protestant Ulster and, though ambivalent about the value of commemoration, (Macaulay was a Liberal), showed an admiration for the resolution of Ulster Protestants in time of peril.¹¹³

¹⁰⁵ Rev. G. Smith, LS, 17 Aug. 1849.

¹⁰⁶ Rev. W. McClure, LS, 19 Aug. 1859.

¹⁰⁷ LS, 16 Aug. 1864, 22 Dec. 1864.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 22 Dec. 1864.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 13 Aug. 1885

¹¹⁰ Macaulay, *Story of the Siege*, , pp.537-41; LS, 18 Aug. 1867.

¹¹¹ I. McBride, *The Siege of Derry*, p.60.

¹¹² Ibid., p.59.

¹¹³ Ibid., pp.59-62.

Overall, there is evidence that the Conservative worldview which emanated from the pulpit on anniversary occasions helped merge the ideas of Protestant liberties gained at the Revolution and Biblical freedoms. The concept of covenant was also associated with the 'chosen people' of the siege and commemoration seen as a requirement of their descendants. These examples could then provide direction in current times, such as holding fast to the old ways and having faith that God would come to their aid. This was reinforced in the secular event. In August 1868, for example, Robert Donnell (Presbyterian) asserted that it was a religious duty to return a nobleman at the election to protect Protestantism. He added that if there was any more apathy from the Protestants of England, the wars of the Revolution would have to be fought again.¹¹⁴

An important theme in the narrative dimension was the role of God's hand in British history, or providentialism. On 18 December 1857, George Smith (Anglican) stated,

I am a Briton: I belong to a country that exercises a wider dominion than God ever before entrusted to human hands in a country where amidst all the remaining darkness, the light of evangelical truth yet shines with steady and advancing brightness

His perception was that God was rewarding Protestant Britain for her adherence to the truth in a world where the Papacy had too much control. In similar vein, William McClure, at the August anniversary in 1859, preached at the First Presbyterian Church emphasising the perception of national wealth and plenty as a sign of God's favour.¹¹⁵ He spoke of the spiritual and temporal blessings 'which

¹¹⁴ LS, 14 Aug. 1868.

¹¹⁵ Psalm 126, verse 3, '*The Lord has done great things for us, wherefore we are glad*',

as a nation we enjoy' and called for blessings on the Queen and on the country. Like Canaan, 'Ireland was a goodly land, advancing in temporal prosperity'.¹¹⁶ There was a slight difference in context here. In most of the sermons on anniversary occasions, the emphasis was on Britain, the Union and Empire in line with the Conservative outlook. McClure, however, was a Liberal Presbyterian and was involved in the anniversary services only in the period between 1859 and 1863 when the influence of the Revival was holding sub cultures together. His emphasis on Ireland was indicative of the Liberal concept of Irish patriotism which was non-sectarian and did not approve of divisive commemorative displays. Such events were regarded as celebrations of Civil War victories relating to the victories of one section of the community over the other.¹¹⁷ His focus may also have reflected the hopes for the missionary enterprise in Ireland, sometimes referred to as the Second Reformation, and for a future united Protestant Ireland, a sentiment which seemed to feature more within the Liberal camp where William McClure was a leading figure.

There was a general belief that to retain Britain's pre-eminence, Conservative Protestants must remain true to Protestantism.¹¹⁸ This was emphasised by William Beresford (Anglican) who stated that Britons were favoured subjects of an Empire grander and freer than ancient Rome.¹¹⁹ Employing the Bible, he used Israel as an example that showed that national corruption resulted in national punishment and national righteousness in national prosperity.¹²⁰ Drawing parallels with the Israelites was a common technique in the sermons alluding to the relationship of a chosen people to their God. Beresford emphasised that, in the Old Testament,

¹¹⁶ LS, 19 Aug. 1859.

¹¹⁷ G. Peatling, 'Whatever happened to Presbyterian radicalism?', p.159.

¹¹⁸ W. Berresford, LS, 23 Dec. 1859.

¹¹⁹ Acts Xxi, verse 39 'A citizen of no mean city'.

¹²⁰ LS, 23 Dec. 1859.

God's hand was continually present in using Israel to chastise other nation's idolatries or using other nations to chastise Israel's disobedience. The secret of a nation's strength and prosperity and the principle of a nation's duty were reflected in the fact that 'righteousness exalts a nation'.¹²¹ Richard Babington (Anglican)¹²² reproved those who wished to ignore the hand of God in history and ascribe formative historic events to politics and human nature.¹²³ He was referring to the liberal practice of relegating religion to private life. Henry Martin shared this disapproval¹²⁴. He stated that those who separated historic events from God's works were contradicting the Scriptures.¹²⁵ Congregations were told not to fear for their own country because God had watched over it in the past, 'protecting it like the apple of his eye' and would protect it always.¹²⁶ Protestants had had a special deliverance by the Glorious Revolution. At that time, 'God had set before them an open door' and the Protestant people had not failed Him.¹²⁷

The frequent occurrence of the theme of God's hand in British history suggests how thoroughly this theme was interwoven into the worldview of the community. The theme can be followed across churches and across periods. There was a difference in tone, however, from the earlier references in 1859 and 1860 which might be regarded as confident and expectant, and the references of 1868 and 1875 which warn against interfering with Protestant gains. The 1880s references show their deep concern for the future and a sense of bitterness about the recent past. These changes in tone reflect changes in the interface between the religious

¹²¹ W. Berresford, LS, 21 Dec. 1860.

¹²² (Psalm 44, verse.1; 'We have heard with our ears, O Lord'; 78 verse 4 'We will not hide them from our children', 107, verse 43 'Whoso is wise and will observe these things'.

¹²³ R. Babington, LS, 22 Dec. 1868.

¹²⁴ Epistle to Hebrews, 13, verse 7 'Whose faith follow'.

¹²⁵ H. Martin, LS, 14 Aug. 1875.

¹²⁶ Exodus 14, verse 13, 'Fear not, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord', LS, 19 Dec. 1876, S. Runcie Craig.

¹²⁷ Revelation, 3, verse 8, 'I know thy works; behold I have set before thee a open door, and no man can shut it', S.J. Cochrane, LS, 14 Aug. 1880.

and political arenas. The threat of disestablishment (1869) was a bone of contention between Anglicans and Liberal Presbyterians. The common platform of evangelicalism, overcoming doctrinal differences, helped secure the bond between the conservative element of Presbyterianism and the Anglicans. Liberals, though, believed that parity between all churches would aid conversions and unite Ireland. Compromise had its limits, however, and they readily dismissed the nascent nationalist movement of the early 1870s.¹²⁸ Thereafter, it became the joint concern of all Protestants that further concessions from a Liberal government would lead to an Ireland where Protestants were 'the defeated party'.¹²⁹ Richard Babington's sermon in December 1880 had a distinctly bitter tone as he illustrated how, as Conservatives had predicted, Liberal aspirations of peace and prosperity in Ireland, as a result of accommodation with Roman Catholics, had failed to come to pass. His perception was that the government was supporting the Papacy, which he viewed as a betrayal of the covenant, and he urged his congregation to live a godly life to avoid God's retribution on individuals and on the country.¹³⁰ Again, opposing the more secular view, Canon Smith (Anglican) said that those who claimed that England's greatness was a result of her wealth, should remember the wealth and greatness of Spain and consider how Spain was now the most helpless of nations.¹³¹ The greatness of a nation was at God's disposal.

God's providence in the siege of Londonderry is similarly woven into the fabric of the sermons. Richard Smyth, in the August anniversary sermon in 1860 at the First Presbyterian Church, preached on biblical precedent to set the context for the

¹²⁸ G. Peatling, 'Whatever happened to Presbyterian radicalism?', p.161; *Londonderry Standard*, 12 Nov. 1873.

¹²⁹ Canon O'Hara, *LS*, 13 Aug. 1885.

¹³⁰ 1st Peter, 2, verses 11-15, 'Dearly Beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul', *LS*, 21 Dec.1880

¹³¹ St. John, 8, verses 31,32, '...ye shall know the truth and the truth will set you free', *LS*, 15 Aug. 1882.

siege in the historic past.¹³² He compared Derry with Israel stating that God had set a gate before the people of the siege and they had proved righteous. He stated explicitly that the siege was no mere party conflict but the triumph of truth over error, right over wrong implying that the faithful were God's instruments in attaining a victory for Liberty.¹³³ Like McClure, Smyth was a Liberal Presbyterian but on the concept of God's intervention, he was at one with the Conservatives. The general belief was that if God had not been on the side of their ancestors, 'the enemy would have swallowed them up'.¹³⁴ God, it was believed, had preserved the city - their ancestors were 'instruments in His hands'.¹³⁵ In his first sermon to the Apprentice Boys in 1868, William Alexander illustrated how God's hand was seen in war. God, he asserted, had when they were in as much danger as the Israelites at the Red Sea, made their ancestors the happy instruments of preserving his place, meaning Londonderry. He then drew the parallel between the siege of Derry and Biblical times.¹³⁶ Richard Babington (Anglican) reinforced the message that it was an error to put events down to politics and human hands rather than labouring to find the hand of God in such events.¹³⁷ It was regularly emphasised that it would suit *some* to remove God's workings from the page of history but to do so would be to contradict the whole Scriptures. Congregations were told that God worked through and in man and that records of such noble actions had been handed down for emulation. It was also claimed that saints and martyrs did not belong solely to the first century after Christ; the men of Derry had the same heroic courage during the siege.¹³⁸

¹³² Isaiah 26, verse 2, 'Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation that keepeth the truth may enter in', LS, 17 Aug. 1860.

¹³³ LS, 17 Aug. 1860.

¹³⁴ W. Craig, LS, 17 Aug. 1860.

¹³⁵ F. Smith, LS, 17 Aug. 1860.

¹³⁶ LS, 14 Aug. 1868.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 22 Dec. 1868.

¹³⁸ H. Martin, LS, 14 Aug. 1875.

Again, the theme of God's hand at work in the siege and its aftermath is one that was commonly accepted and reinforced in the secular event and the Conservative newspaper coverage. The siege was used as a metaphor for action against all that was regarded as dangerous and inappropriate. In 1858, for example the *Sentinel* stated:

While we feel grateful for past deliverances and past reliefs, the citizens of Derry and the people of the empire, should awake to the necessity of closing the gates against Popery and Liberalism - of raising the cry "No Surrender" - of watching, praying, enduring, fighting; and then they may expect the same God will deliver them, who delivered their fathers and shed the blessings of pure and unsullied liberty on a truth-holding and happy empire.¹³⁹

The liberal (theological) view referred to above was perceived by many conservative Christians as ultimately leading to parity between good and evil. (This idea was opposed by Ulster Liberal Presbyterians also.¹⁴⁰) William Beresford, in December 1859, emphasised that he did 'not hold with separate spiritual and temporal matters as *some*' and he believed 'it appropriate to deal with all matters from the pulpit'. He reminded his congregation that St. Paul had not been above dealing with worldly issues and had been conscious of his position as 'a citizen of no mean city'.¹⁴¹ In December 1860, Marcus Beresford (Anglican) presented an argument that the secret of national greatness was resting on the mercy of a covenant God. He emphasised the consequences of failing to remain a 'bulwark of reformed religion' and stated that the eyes of the world were on Britain. He urged the congregation to love the national religion.¹⁴²

¹³⁹ LS, 13 Aug. 1858.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 16 Aug. 1861.

¹⁴¹ Acts 21, verse 39, 'A citizen of no mean city', LS, 23 Dec. 1859.

¹⁴² LS, 21 Dec. 1860.

The nineteenth century saw many challenges to traditional narratives of the world. Lower criticism related to the alternate readings of the ancient biblical manuscripts. Higher criticism focused on 'authorship, sources, literary features and historical backgrounds'. Such views as the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, the single authorship of Isaiah and Daniel, and the accounts of Jesus in the Gospels were challenged. Geological discoveries suggested that the world evolved and Darwin's theories challenged the commitment to divine creation.¹⁴³ This was obviously a topical issue in 1875 when it was raised by Henry Martin (Anglican) at the August commemoration when he warned against listening to 'those who wished to remove God from the equation'.¹⁴⁴ It was also a spur to William Alexander to challenge it in his sermon in December 1875 when he restated the view of those who accepted the theory of 'Design', believing in the existence of a greater Intelligence and its effect over nature and in history.¹⁴⁵ The theory of evolution contributed to the trend towards diversity, some feeling that the theory could be accommodated within Christianity, others completely refuting it.¹⁴⁶ The anniversary sermons reflected conservative theology.

As the seventies progressed there were increasing challenges to the conservative view. In August 1877, William Alexander bemoaned the fall of the Established Church eight years earlier, a consequence, he believed, of modern muddled thinking. 'How different political life is from what it was half a century ago. Then it was a game of a few giants in mind; now it is managed by a host of comparatively small men. Now it is not one strong man, one clear eye that guides the ship in its

¹⁴³ T. H. Olbricht, 'The Rhetoric of Henry Ward Beecher and Frederic W. Farrar regarding Biblical Criticism', in *New History of the Sermon*, ed. by Ellison, p.179.

¹⁴⁴ LS, 14 Aug. 1875.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 21 Dec. 1875.

¹⁴⁶ J. Wolffe, *God and Greater Britain*, p.167.

danger.'¹⁴⁷ This suggested that God had not, as yet, provided them with a leader to guide them safely. On 21 December 1875, he had suggested that if a man did not step out from mediocrity, then God did not want the work done.¹⁴⁸ The metaphor of the siege suggested that the best course was holding firm and believing in God's mercy despite all tribulation. Such faithfulness gained deliverance from all evils.

In the 1880s, the community was still under siege by possible revolution, communism and the ruin of 'the class upon whom the cause of civilization mainly depends' (meaning the landlords) and the future maintenance of the Reformed Church caused concern.¹⁴⁹ In 1882, John Gwynn laid as much emphasis on the late nineteenth-century struggle against new ideas as the historical struggle that had taken place in 1688. Instead of emphasising the need to rejoice in God's favour, as had been the case earlier in the period, he asked the congregation to draw strength from the example of their ancestors and to rise above earthly confrontation and again to put their faith in God.¹⁵⁰ There was trepidation here about diversity, but for conservatives there was no change in the confident attitude that God would intervene directly at the appropriate time. In August 1883, Rev. Joseph Potter¹⁵¹, reminded his congregation of what God had achieved for the city in the past. He added, 'shall we not acknowledge the hand of God in those men of valour and bravery who were made instrumental in securing to us these priceless blessings that we enjoy – our freedom, our prosperity, our open Bible, in a word

¹⁴⁷ Romans 8, verse 2, '*The law of the spirit of life if Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death*', LS, 14 Aug. 1877.

¹⁴⁸ LS, 21 Dec. 1875.

¹⁴⁹ Rev. William Alexander, LS, 20 Dec. 1881

¹⁵⁰ Phil. 1, verse 27, '*May your conversation be as it becometh the Gospel of Christ*', LS, 19 Dec. 1882.

¹⁵¹ Although the main service was in the cathedral, there was an extra evening service and J. Potter spoke in the Free Church (Anglican).

our civil and religious privileges?’¹⁵² Confident as they were of God’s intervention, however, they were concerned about the fact that He had not already taken action at this late period. They were concerned that this might be a result of Britain’s losing its way and straying from the path of righteousness. They feared retribution.

Ethics

This component of the worldview provided the driving force of life for evangelicals. For them religion was the great business of life and this was the message emphasised by George Smith in August 1857.¹⁵³ Activism did not only apply to conversion. The fervour spilled over into other aspects of existence such as living a demonstrably Christian life and fulfilling the duties required by God. It was stressed that sound principles and moral action went hand in hand.¹⁵⁴

Overall, the guiding force of the ethical component was crucial to the structure of the worldview. It provided strict guidelines and a pattern for action. For example, opposing Roman Catholicism was a duty, sectarian clashes were not. Clergy emphasised that while it was a duty to enlighten their fellow countrymen through missionary endeavours and example, it was not necessary to engender hate.¹⁵⁵ The necessity for unity was also underlined. ‘Be united, in disunion our weakness lies.’¹⁵⁶ A strict guideline was not to take the path of least resistance when it came to disputes. ‘Truth comes before peace’ was the motto.¹⁵⁷ Another was that taking the Liberal path was not an option for those who shared their worldview.

¹⁵² LS, 14 Aug. 1883.

¹⁵³ G. Smith, LS, 14 Aug. 1857.

¹⁵⁴ R. C. Donnell, LS, 15 Aug. 1865, speeches.

¹⁵⁵ F. Smith, LS, 22 Dec. 1863.

¹⁵⁶ W. Craig, LS, 20 Dec. 1861.

¹⁵⁷ W. McClure, LS, 16 Aug. 1861.

For them, the politics of religious equality was equating truth with error.¹⁵⁸ 'Leave the spirit of lying Liberalism to others' meant that they must stick to their principles and not equivocate.¹⁵⁹ It was a basic requirement to fulfil the covenant perceived to exist between this chosen people and God.¹⁶⁰ One of the covenantal duties was commemoration.¹⁶¹ It was believed that the outcome of the siege was God's victory not man's and it was wrong to usurp the credit. What was being celebrated was the fact of God's deliverance and his honour was being proclaimed in commemoration along with the martyrs of the siege. Just as the Israelites had conditions laid upon them regarding commemoration, so had the people of Derry who had been touched by God's hand in a similar manner. These conditions included commemoration. They believed that the memories must be kept alive for future generations who might have to take up the fight.¹⁶²

Such Christian duties were to be fulfilled by being 'courageous, active and watchful' and 'moral, charitable and pious'.¹⁶³ The belief was held, and reinforced by the clergy, that personal righteousness contributed to national prosperity and national corruption resulted in national punishment.¹⁶⁴ Continually emphasised was the belief that national prosperity was a direct result of individuals maintaining and propagating the Protestant faith – this made Britain the predominant nation on earth. The congregation was told it must be active in spreading the truth.¹⁶⁵ They were told there would always be obstacles to overcome but when one sinner took the 'heavenward course' there would be a 'hosanna of hosts'.¹⁶⁶

¹⁵⁸ R. Babington, *LS*, 22 Dec. 1868.

¹⁵⁹ R. C. Donnell, *LS*, 15 Aug. 1865.

¹⁶⁰ F. Smith, *LS*, 17 Aug. 1860.

¹⁶¹ G. Smith, *LS*, 18 Dec. 1857.

¹⁶² F. Smith *LS*, 17 Aug. 1860.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁴ W. Beresford, *LS*, 23 Dec. 1859.

¹⁶⁵ R. Babington, *LS*, 22 Dec. 1868.

¹⁶⁶ H. Martin, *LS*, 14 Aug. 1875.

There were also duties to the Queen. It was necessary to be patriotic and loyal.¹⁶⁷ The covenant had harnessed together the concept of God and nation. At the time of disestablishment, the congregation were told not to show disloyalty to the monarch because the government made mistakes.¹⁶⁸ Congregations were told on two occasions in both Presbyterian and Anglican churches to honour all men, love the brotherhood, fear God and honour the king. This reading from Peter II was not the text for the sermon but this and other texts were often referred to during the course of the sermons to endorse a particular point.¹⁶⁹

Patriotism as a theme appears integral to the services in both Anglican and Presbyterian churches. Prayers for Queen and country accompanied every sermon just as the national anthem formed part of the wider religious service. It was emphasised, for example, by William Beresford in 1859.¹⁷⁰ He introduces a vision of the world by inter-relating religion and patriotism based on biblical precedent. He stated that when God gave Israel rest, having subdued their enemies, David and his countrymen were uplifted.¹⁷¹ They felt love for their country but it was love of a blessed nation. Britain was also, he believed, a blessed nation in the tradition of Israel and, as a result of the Revolutionary settlement, had been provided with a constitutional king to which one must show loyalty. Queen Victoria had taken on William III's mantle as preserver of the constitution. Particular emphasis was given by Rev. Thomas Lucas Scott in 1869 to the importance of loyalty in the period of disestablishment of the Church of

¹⁶⁷ W. Beresford, *LS*, 21 Dec. 1860.

¹⁶⁸ T. L. Scott, *LS*, 20 Dec. 1869.

¹⁶⁹ F. G. Porter, *LS*, 14 Aug. 1863, F. Smith, 22 Dec. 1863.

¹⁷⁰ 1 Kings, verse 4, 5 'Now the Lord has given me rest on every side', *LS*, 19 Aug. 1859.

¹⁷¹ *LS*, 19 Aug. 1859.

Ireland.¹⁷² Mistakes and injustices of governments were not to be allowed to undermine loyalty.

William McClure (Presbyterian) linked Christianity and patriotism in 1859,¹⁷³ and again in 1861.¹⁷⁴ It was universally maintained that it was the duty of Protestants to prove themselves worthy, show a loyal and patriotic spirit and defend the Queen and realm. As the Queen performed her duty, so too should patriots. They followed the moral laws, showed their loyalty by voting for the right party, fighting in the British army, and commemorating anniversaries.¹⁷⁵ McClure went as far as to state that 'patriotism is a part of religion and he who is a true lover of God will be a true lover of his country also'.¹⁷⁶ In August 1871, when there were restrictions on the anniversary celebrations, Rev. Edward George Dougherty (Anglican) spoke of the holy principle which brought them together to commemorate, disregarding the politics of statesmen. They were 'celebrating a national blessing and consecrating the kindlings of patriotism with the breathings of faith'.¹⁷⁷ Charles Crookshank (Anglican) spoke movingly in 1878 of wishing to bring comfort to 'the most illustrious and beloved of sovereigns' on the death of her daughter, Princess Alice, showing a level of personal attachment to the Queen rather than necessarily patriotism.¹⁷⁸ Joseph Potter in an evening service in Christ Church, spoke of a country ennobled by the zeal of patriots, and enriched by the blood of martyrs'.¹⁷⁹ In the secular event in December 1863, Hugh Hanna spoke of national honour being more precious than rubies and in December 1864, John Finlay, editor of the *Sentinel* and *Apprentice Boy*, spoke of the superiority of the British constitution

¹⁷² Ibid., 20 Dec. 1869.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 19 Aug. 1859.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 16 Aug. 1861.

¹⁷⁵ William Beresford, *LS*, 21 Dec. 1860.

¹⁷⁶ *LS*, 16 Aug. 1861.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 15 Aug. 1871.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 19 Dec. 1878.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 14 Aug. 1883.

when compared to that of America as the latter allowed people to 'trample on the negro race'.

There was no change in the patriotic tone over the period, rather it took on a harder edge with rising Irish nationalism, as links to Britain and the empire were integral to the worldview. However, in the early sermons when the Liberal ministers were involved, there was a subtle difference. While Beresford's (Anglican) patriotic emphasis was towards Britain and the Empire, McClure (Presbyterian) was looking towards a converted Ireland. Liberal Presbyterians appeared to have a more heightened sense of Irish patriotism although it remained firmly within an imperial context.¹⁸⁰ For Conservatives, clarification of exactly where loyalty lay took place in the period of disestablishment. It was emphasised by Thomas Lucas Scott (Anglican) in December 1869 that it was important to remain loyal to the throne despite betrayals of 'session and cabinet'; that loyalty to Britain was beyond acts of government. He emphasised that Ulster Protestants saw themselves as part of a larger body of Protestants who saw a different future from that proposed by the government. Their attachment was to the throne and the great British empire; loyalty to governments was conditional.¹⁸¹ Their desire was for 'Protestant politics' of the kind advocated by William Johnston that did not put any issue before the demands of religion and kept the concepts of nation and religion united. The nation was believed to be favoured because of its adherence to Protestant truth. Retribution would follow if strict Protestantism was not observed.¹⁸²

¹⁸⁰ G. Peatling, 'Whatever happened to Presbyterian radicalism?', p.159.

¹⁸¹ LS, 20 Dec. 1869.

¹⁸² Wolfe, *God and Greater Britain*, p.163.

Evangelising was also an ethical issue. Its importance was a theme that occurred most frequently in the early period of the analysis, particularly with reference to the Revival. At the time of the Revival, William Beresford preached that Britons and Englishmen must do their best to build God's spiritual house; they must build up faith in themselves and in others. He encouraged the setting up of schools and missions to teach the young.¹⁸³ William McClure referred to the importance of the Revival movement saying they were engaged in conflict with the spiritual enemy (the Papacy) and were blessed with a pious sovereign, senators, professionals, soldiers and merchants who would support it. They also had the necessary tools for conversion in bibles, Sabbath schools and missionaries and hoped to convert both Catholics and nominal Protestants.¹⁸⁴

In August 1860, Richard Smyth, in the First Presbyterian Church, said that it was the General Assembly's day for contributions for the Protestants in Italy which 'touched to the very quick of evangelicalism'. He spoke of opening the spiritual gates of Christ's church for the reception of redeemed nations who love and wish to learn the way of righteousness. He emphasised that it was possible to convert a whole country in a day if God was on your side - the inference was that this was also possible in Ireland and Italy.¹⁸⁵

The commemoration services were held outside the city gates for the first time in 1861 while the cathedral was being renovated. William Craig of Christ Church said that it was an omen that the time was drawing near when loyalty to the throne would be established throughout the country.¹⁸⁶ Implicit in this is the expectation of the conversion of the whole country to Protestantism which suggested that

¹⁸³ LS, 19 Aug. 1859.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 17 Aug. 1860.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 20 Dec. 1861.

evangelicals generally had not given up on the conversion of Ireland. This spiritual aspiration however had a political edge. This was consistent with all the religio-politicism of the worldview. There was never a clear division between spiritual and political ventures; rather there was a continuum with politics developing from the spiritual element.

The impetus to convert tended to wane as it became clear that a converted Ireland was unlikely. Rev. Richard Smyth spoke of the difficulties involved in converting Roman Catholics. He underlined the 'historic obstruction' of an incomplete Reformation and the 'political obstruction' of Rome's political awareness, due to its facility to unite temporal and spiritual power. Because of its strength and determination to acquire political power, 'a great portion of the energies of Irish Protestantism has been expended in guarding the independence of the country instead of directly influencing the souls and hearts of a benighted population'.¹⁸⁷

Concepts of patriotism and evangelism were linked. Beresford stated that nations could only reap the benefits of God's approval in their present state of existence – they had no afterlife – so he argued that their benefits were due to adhering to the moral laws of God. He asserted that the attention of Europe and the world was centred on Britain, a country favoured by God. Therefore, he believed, people must prove themselves worthy of such approval by showing a loyal, patriotic spirit, defending the Queen and realm and striving to carry Christianity and civilisation abroad.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 17 Aug. 1860.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 21 Dec. 1860.

In the sermons, the tone of this earlier period suggested confidence in the future (rising from the spirit of the Revival). The confidence that Ireland as well as other parts of the Empire were to embrace Protestantism is confined to this earlier period before the reality of disestablishment and threat of home rule began to take precedence. Thereafter, as the pressures on the status quo became acute, Protestantism turned again to protecting the civil and religious liberties it held so dear with a renewed evangelical enthusiasm. Activism was central to the ethos of evangelicalism and refers to more than the spreading of the gospel. It included efforts to implement the ethics of the gospel, a prime example being Wilberforce's campaign against the slave trade. It was, for example, what drove the Alexanders, less receptive to other aspects of evangelical culture, to give up their spare time and to work ceaselessly in what they perceived to be God's work; and it encouraged Johnston to work tirelessly in his bid to disseminate Protestantism. The prevailing evangelical attitude was that action was the virtuous life and the world was the theatre of action.¹⁸⁹

Evangelical activism, as defined by Bebbington, has at its heart the drive to gain souls.¹⁹⁰ Typically, in this religio-political context, it was the preserving of souls, with its implications for national well being, which took precedence. The activism of evangelicalism was inter-related with the activism demonstrated in the siege. Thus the action of closing of the gates against the Roman Catholic enemy was given a religious gloss by the anniversary preacher. Richard Babbington, for example, stated that God was as present during the siege as he was at the Red Sea.¹⁹¹ In the sermons, the constant exhortation of clergy to address issues of moral living was maintained through the years and suggested an evangelical ethos

¹⁸⁹ Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, p.12.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.10-11.

¹⁹¹ LS, 16 Aug. 1870.

within conservatism. For example, it was essential to live a godly life and to provide a good example; it was important to define one's religion in a positive manner and not allow it to be regarded merely as the opposite of Roman Catholicism; it was one's sacred duty to oppose the advances of the Papacy. These were issues tinged with evangelical fervour. However, religio-political activism was also perceived to have been endorsed by God. As a result, there was cross-fertilisation between evangelical activism and religio-political activism.

Congregations were encouraged to discharge their duties and fulfil their part of the Christian covenant.¹⁹² Beresford reminded them that they were soldiers of the Cross, and should obey the laws of the realm, church and state. He urged them to be foremost in defence of the throne and to protect rights, honours and religion.¹⁹³ McClure exhorted them to uphold the standard raised by their ancestors – they must obey the laws, he said, even if they were severe and opposed to their wishes.¹⁹⁴ In August 1868, Bishop Alexander preached on how God's hand is seen in war and emphasised that the situation did not change with time. He charged the congregation to avoid riot thus avoiding the ridicule of the thoughtful and educated men of the nineteenth century.¹⁹⁵ Congregations were advised to show they were worthy citizens by attending church. Binding themselves to the church, they were told, would gain respectability for their cause.¹⁹⁶

Observing the Sabbath was a commandment close to the heart of evangelicalism. William Alexander said that he had been told that some Apprentice Boys only attended church on the anniversaries. These were obviously nominal Protestants

¹⁹² Francis Smith, *LS*, 17 Aug. 1860.

¹⁹³ *LS*, 21 Dec. 1860.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 16 Aug. 1861.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 14 Aug. 1868.

¹⁹⁶ Andrew Smyley, *LS*, 14 Aug. 1884.

who were more attracted to the folk element of the celebrations rather than true evangelicals. He warned them to beware of the wrath of God who was divinely intolerant of error.¹⁹⁷ Richard Babington, (Anglican) in 1880, condemned the continued outrage against the Lord's Day and said that standing up for the sanctity of Sunday did not fit in with liberal principles.¹⁹⁸ The Liberals he was referring to could only have been theological liberals as Richard Smyth, a political Liberal, worked alongside Johnston on the House of Commons Sunday Closing Committee in the 1880s.

The manner in which the congregation should be active was a thread running through the sermons. Advice always stopped short of advocating violence. A change in the later years was that the advice was to steer clear of revolutionary ideas. It was maintained that the fight against error must continue not through revolutionary ideas but through tried and tested means (in other words, peaceful ones). Practical Christianity, it was asserted, was the way to improve the world and the sterling advances of those involved in the work of the Protestant Orphan Society, an Orange charity, were cited as an example of such practicality.¹⁹⁹

Richard Babington, preaching on disestablishment in 1868, stated that the politics of religious equality was wrong; you could not equate error and truth and putting Protestantism on a par with Roman Catholicism was error. The first weapon against Rome was to be prayer, the second affirmative action by instruction.²⁰⁰ The suggestion here was that they must be active in spreading the truth on every stage (including the political arena). Just as the Calvinistic principles referred to earlier may have influenced the early Church of Ireland, there is a definite

¹⁹⁷ LS, 14 Aug. 1873.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 21 Dec. 1880.

¹⁹⁹ Canon Smith, LS, 15 Aug. 1882.

²⁰⁰ LS, 22 Dec. 1868.

suggestion that the principles of religio-political activism associated with the Scottish 'covenant of works' also penetrated. This covenant evolved in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries 'to mobilize radical Protestants against absolutist government and anything that smacked of popery'.²⁰¹ This mindset, resulting from Calvinistic theology, covenant thinking and religio-political activism seemed as much a feature of the Church of Ireland as of Presbyterianism.

Experiential

The cross fertilisation between evangelical activism and covenantal requirements evident in the ethical dimension was also pronounced in the experiential dimension. This dimension relates to the experience of faith and personal relationship with God, as well as the more intense conversion experience. In the religious atmosphere of the cathedral and Presbyterian Church, evangelical belief in being saved in an individual capacity was reinforced by the belief in being one of God's chosen people inheriting the duties due to a covenantal God. The rhetoric of the evangelical preacher was designed to lift the spirits of the congregation. William Alexander (Anglican), for example, though more High Church than evangelical, had an evangelical approach to preaching whereby he prepared a skeleton address that left room for the inspiration of the Holy Spirit whilst delivering the sermon.²⁰² In the Presbyterian Church, in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, suggestions were made to the Synod of Ulster that emphasised the necessity of conveying the revelation of God as opposed to philosophical theories in sermons.²⁰³ The Apprentice Boys' appreciation for inspirational preaching was illustrated by their comments in the preface of an

²⁰¹ Akenson, *God's Peoples*, pp.114-5.

²⁰² Dickson, *Beyond Religious Discourse*, p.68; See Chapter 2, p.135.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, p.69.

anniversary sermon by Thomas Gough, Dean of Londonderry, printed in 1826.

They commended the sermon and, in recording its attributes, registered 'feeling' before 'eloquence' and 'truth'.²⁰⁴

The siege myth was used as a device to transport the congregation. Edward Dougherty (Anglican), in 1871, said 'I ask for no strong effort of imagination as I lead you to spots where you daily tread.' The harrowing story of the siege and the winning of God's favour by the faith and steadfastness of their ancestors was stirring and uplifting fare. The siege myth was preceded in the sermon by biblical allusions to the mercies shown to the Israelites and their requirement to commemorate, and succeeded by allusion to current circumstances. 'It is this indomitable spirit we would cherish by our commemoration, hallowing festivities by solemnities and thus perpetuating and consecrating that enthusiasm of patriotism without which a nation must decay.'²⁰⁵

The experiential dimension did not have separate themes but reinforced the ethical dimension lending force to ideas of patriotism, evangelism and activism. Its contribution was in adding a deeper and more spiritual conviction to values and beliefs, inspiring action.

Political

Politics was always a component of worldviews in Derry, whether Catholic, Liberal Presbyterian or Conservative Protestant. The last provided an overall description for the Conservative element among Presbyterians, as well as Anglicans,

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ LS, 15 Aug. 1871.

Methodists, and Baptists. The Liberal Presbyterians tended to form an outgroup, separate from other Protestants, particularly in relation to the land question.²⁰⁶

This is not to say that there were not Liberal Anglicans or Methodists, but these tended to be in the minority. For example, in the poll for Londonderry in the 1868 elections 13 Anglicans voted for the Liberal candidate whilst 275 voted for the Conservative; 163 Presbyterians voted Liberal whilst 259 voted Conservative; 27 other Nonconformists voted Liberal as opposed to 43 who voted Conservative. (The Catholic vote was 501 Liberal as opposed to 22 Conservative.)²⁰⁷

Questions of disestablishment and home rule were dealt with from the pulpit. This was acceptable, as far as William Alexander was concerned, because these issues impacted on religion.²⁰⁸ Richard Babington, at the time of disestablishment, stated that they were then at a point where the rights and privileges, won by God's hand in the past, were in danger of being lost. He asserted that it was not merely a question of church establishment that should concern his congregation but the fact that Ultramontanist was gaining a foothold in Britain. Concessions to popery, he stated, would give Roman Catholics power to demand further spoliation. It would first wound Protestantism, he believed, then demand settlement of the land question, then establishment for Roman Catholics, then repeal of the Union.²⁰⁹

Twelve years later Babington said that the government had sacrificed the loyal and orderly for the disloyal and disorderly. He asserted that the government that came into power in 1868 had sacrificed the Church of Ireland expecting peace and prosperity in Ireland as a result. Land legislation followed with the same hope but

²⁰⁶ G. Peatling, 'Whatever happened to Presbyterian radicalism?', p.158.

²⁰⁷ B. Walker, *Ulster Politics: the Formative Years, 1868-86* (Belfast: UHF and IIS, 1989), p.63; See Chapter 2, pp.158-9.

²⁰⁸ Alexander, *Primate Alexander*, p.230.

²⁰⁹ R. Babington, LS, 22 Dec. 1868.

he claimed the real aim was the extinction of the landlord class and the eventual repeal of the Union. He stated that Fenian processions, commemorating those they regarded as martyrs, were allowed to continue with perfect freedom. The Protestant only claimed the same freedoms granted to the disloyal, he added.²¹⁰

William Alexander said that it would be wrong to tie the Church to a political party but made it clear he opposed the Liberals. He commented on the danger of losing the landlord class and added that there was a great democratic current at that time but fashions changed. Other such changes had happened in the past but had not lasted, he encouraged his hearers. He also warned that a great power wished to destroy the fruits of the Reformation and this aimed to set up an Irish Republic. He could not see a happy ending and placed his hopes in the simple faith of the people which might gain them God's help.²¹¹

In 1882, the congregation were encouraged by George Smith (Anglican) to fight revolutionary ideas through the virtues of the reformed church. It was said that their evangelical church was the source of national liberty and this had brought them their prominent position among nations. The best way to fight current circumstances was through practical Christianity.²¹² Three years later the Dean of Clonfert added that if Roman Catholicism gained control in Ireland as elsewhere, there would be revolution and all religions would be overthrown.²¹³

The theme of protecting Protestant civil and religious liberties inherent in the British Constitution occurred in some form or other in every sermon as the privileges given to Israel were compared to those won in 1688. Religious and civil

²¹⁰ R. Babington, *LS*, 21 Dec. 1880.

²¹¹ W. Alexander, *LS*, 20 Dec. 1881.

²¹² Canon Smith, *LS*, 15 Aug. 1882.

²¹³ Dean of Clonfert, *LS*, 19 Dec. 1885.

liberties and the constitution tend to be bracketed together as the constitution was moulded in that period. Protestant liberties and the constitution were testimony to God's favour and must be preserved.

British people, it was believed, enjoyed more liberty than any other country and it was emphasised that they must labour to extend this freedom to others.²¹⁴ The need to preserve the civil and religious liberties that made them part of the most pre-eminent nation on earth was regarded as being of paramount importance.²¹⁵ It was believed that God's hand had preserved Londonderry and secured its people's religious and civil liberties. As such the gains of the Glorious Revolution and perceived deliverance at the time of the siege became linked together in people's understanding.²¹⁶ They were compared to the special privileges bestowed on Israel.²¹⁷ Such unification of spiritual and national liberties was regarded as a blessing and it was considered the duty of all to protect them.²¹⁸ The interrelationship between such liberties and Protestantism became a constant in an uncertain world.²¹⁹

It was believed that earlier concessions to Roman Catholics placed them in a stronger position to over-turn these liberties. This concern was most succinctly put by William Craig in 1861. (This was well before the disestablishment crisis and appears to refer to the earlier repeal of the penal laws and to Emancipation.) He asked what concessions to the Roman Catholics had achieved. 'Had they

²¹⁴ William McClure, *LS*, 19 Aug. 1859.

²¹⁵ William Beresford, *LS*, 23 Dec. 1859.

²¹⁶ Francis Smith, *LS*, 17 Aug. 1860.

²¹⁷ *LS*, 21 Dec. 1860.

²¹⁸ 3rd chapter and part of 8th verse Revelations, 'I know thy works; behold I have set before thee an open door and no man can shut it'.

²¹⁹ *LS*, 14 Aug. 1880, S. Cochrane.

become more satisfied and more loyal? They had not.' As such, there should be no fresh demands granted as concessions had their limits.²²⁰

The perceived danger to civil and religious liberties reached a staging point in the period leading to disestablishment, escalating as the 1870s progressed with demands for home rule. As it became clear that Gladstone would support home rule (1885) these liberties, always a sacred trust, became the objects of a crusade. In December 1885, the Dean of Clonfert said:

The glories of the past are ever to be held in remembrance but we must learn from them lessons suited to the present ...
'Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong'. In Ireland the democratic movement of the present day, has given to the demand for home rule a commanding strength, which threatens to involve us in many trials; and for these it is as well that we should be prepared.²²¹

Richard Babington at the secular meeting said that loyalists must stand forward and show that they would not stand for home rule.²²²

The protection of these liberties provided motivation for the loyalist orders and was central to their activism. This took the form of maintaining the status quo in parliament and the dissemination of Protestantism. Evangelical Orangemen like Johnston saw Loyalism as a protective network that supported evangelising. Evolving from public banding for protection, it safeguarded the evangelical Protestant worldview which instigated the missionary impulse. It might be suggested that in a province such as Ulster in the later nineteenth century, the obverse side of evangelising was this form of protectionism, shielding the God-granted privileges against the dangers of Liberalism and Catholicism as well as

²²⁰ LS, 20 Dec. 1861.

²²¹ Ibid., 19 Dec. 1885.

²²² Ibid.

Infidelity and Communism. In this geographical area, it might be regarded as an additional aspect of evangelicalism.

Worldview Analysis

The analysis of the Apprentice Boys' worldview, through the window of the sermons, highlighted certain themes. These were:

1. the necessity for commemoration;
2. the centrality of the covenant and Protestant unity;
3. God's intervention in British history and his presence at the siege of Derry;
4. the importance of patriotism, evangelising and activism;
5. the necessity to protect civil and religious liberties;
6. the dangers of Roman Catholicism.

While they do not all appear in every sermon on every occasion, these themes are all prominent throughout the period. The final theme, the danger represented by Roman Catholicism has not been attributed to a particular dimension because it was interwoven throughout. The siege was a metaphor for Protestant unity in opposing Roman Catholicism. Because of their activism, they were blessed. Examples can be found in every sermon, implicit if not explicit because opposition to the religio-political system of Roman Catholicism was central to the identity of the Ulster Conservative evangelical. Richard Smyth, despite his Liberal leanings, described Roman Catholicism in terms of the beast of the Apocalypse. He reasoned that the horns of the beast represented the spiritual pretensions of Rome and the dragon's voice the temporal pretensions, both of which denied liberty.²²³ Richard Babington (Anglican) in 1868 spoke of the pretensions of Popery and

²²³ LS, 17 Aug. 1860.

stated that having gained concessions it was now trying to despoil Protestantism in Ireland.²²⁴ Henry Martin in 1875 warned that there were worse things than death and these were the death of liberty, knowledge, intellect and soul – the result of forsaking Protestantism and allowing Roman Catholicism too much sway.²²⁵ Samuel Cochrane (Anglican) in 1881 also suggested that the papal system fulfilled the prophecy contained in the book of Revelations. This eschatology was a significant stimulus as Roman Catholicism was equated with ultimate evil. Cochrane then reminded the congregation about the 'bloodstained' reign of Mary, again a very emotive image. The strongest opposition to Roman Catholicism was evident in the years when Protestantism seemed most under threat, as in the years of disestablishment and home rule, but it was omnipresent. However, distinction was always drawn between Roman Catholicism as system and the Roman Catholic as an individual.

In analysing by dimension, it is clear that there was overlap and repetition, mainly because the dimensions themselves overlap. When extracts from sermons were used more than once, however, it was because they made different points in different contexts. But the point is that all the dimensions were engaged and that the religio-political values and beliefs held by the community permeated every aspect of their worldview. Religion and politics were to all intents and purposes a continuum; political views developed from religious beliefs.

²²⁴ Ibid., 22 Dec. 1868.

²²⁵ Ibid., 14 Aug. 1875.

Conclusion

Overall, the sermons demonstrated a complex interweaving of local history, biblicalism, covenantalism and evangelical values that were mutually reinforcing. Using a time-honoured format that accommodated traditional precepts, the preacher applied the lessons from the past to current situations. The necessity for Protestant unity and activism in the face of danger from Roman Catholicism was the central message.

The sermons reflected and reinforced a particular Conservative Protestant worldview, one that was conservative in theology as well as politics. It was also evangelical, reflecting a cross denominational unity that resulted from common doctrines, eschatology and political orientation. In effect, the sermons were attuned to the worldview of William Johnston and his like-minded contemporaries studied in Chapter One.

The historical narrative of the siege had become assimilated into the Old Testament biblical narratives and had acquired a covenantal emphasis. Their cumulative examples were used as a guide for directing current political responses. The concept of covenant and identity as a chosen people had become established in the mindset of both Anglicans and Presbyterians. This was reflected in the significance of commemoration and, with the siege as metaphor for unity and divine favour, raises possibilities about the applicability of the concept of civil religion in relation to the developing practices of the loyalist organisation.²²⁶

²²⁶ See Chapter 5.

For those attending the sermons in the period of the Revival, a general unity and common purpose existed for a time that foreshadowed that of the late 1880s when the home rule issue became crucial. From the mid 1860s, however, there was clear division between the Conservative evangelicals and the traditional Liberal group. Evangelical activism combined with the implacability of the covenantal mindset was common to both groups. However, differing perceptions of who the covenanted people were (for the Conservatives they were Ulster Protestants, for the Liberals, Ulster Presbyterians) had significance. Also the impact of pre-millennial and post-millennial eschatology defined the direction which each group would take on political issues and on the question of commemoration.²²⁷ In this period, only cross-denominational Conservative union was demonstrated in the attendance at commemorative events.

Anti-Catholicism was evidently a feature of evangelicalism as well as settler ideology; the religious direction from the pulpit was palpable. The rhetoric of the sermons and the speeches in the secular events were strongly religio-political. There was no clear division between religion and politics. This might be accounted for in part by the presence of clergy at the secular event but the views appeared to be supported by laymen as indicated by the speeches and editorials in the *Sentinel*. This would have resulted in a narrowing of the concept of religion for those who were not regularly church goers. The latter would have had a more balanced religious diet. What is notable is the strength of the political component in the guidance from the pulpit. The Ulster tradition set by Cooke featured strongly in the sermons overlaying the established format of the religio-political framework of the discourses of 'use and instruction'. The continuity of the

²²⁷ See Chapter 2, pp.145-6.

synthesis of evangelicalism and politics in the Ulster preaching tradition established by Cooke is seen today in the political rhetoric of Rev. Ian Paisley.

Paisleyism had its roots in the nineteenth century though it is not readily attributable to a particular tradition. Scott highlights the common interrelating of politics and Protestantism, the anti-Catholicism emanating from the perceived threat of the papacy, and the activism seen in the willingness to engage in confrontations with authority that is similar to the one exhibited by the Apprentice Boys.²²⁸ Wright in his 'Ideology and politics in Ulster' compares Johnston and Paisley, seeing a parallel between the two evangelicals' bid for popular support.²²⁹ Taylor goes further suggesting that Paisley actually used Johnston as a pattern for popular political success.²³⁰ MacIver emphasises Paisley's use of Knox's hermeneutic, using Scripture and history as precedents for cataloguing current events in order to discern God's will, as illustrated in the sermons.²³¹ She also stresses the common covenantal aspect, both in the sense of a covenant of works (activism) and using Old Testament texts to illustrate God's requirements for a covenanted nation. Bruce makes the observation that Paisley's church, the Evangelical Free Presbyterian Church, and Orangeism in the twentieth century were less compatible because the nature of the broad Protestant tradition, to which Unionism is linked via the loyalist orders, had become more liberal in the twentieth century.²³² Orangeism, in Paisley's view, was no longer sufficiently Protestant, because it was now compromising on traditional Protestant values.

²²⁸ Scott, 'The Political Preaching Tradition in Ulster', pp.249-59.

²²⁹ F. Wright, 'Protestant ideology and politics in Ulster', pp.213-80.

²³⁰ Taylor, D., 'Ian Paisley and the Ideology of Ulster Protestantism' in Chris Curtin, Mary Kelly and Liam O'Dowd, *Culture and ideology in Ireland* (Galway: Galway University Press, 1984), pp.59-78.

²³¹ MacIver, 'Ian Paisley', pp.359-78.

²³² S. Bruce, *God Save Ulster*, p.151.

The religious tradition to which Orangeism cleaved in the late nineteenth-century was strongly evangelical and Conservative and had certainly common ground with the later evangelicalism of Ian Paisley. Characteristics of the loyalist worldview, such as loyalty to the Queen, church and state (assuming continued commitment to the Protestant religion), support of Protestant hegemony, strong anti-Catholicism, and commitment to action are important aspects of Paisleyism. Further, the biblical parallels, references to a chosen people, covenantalism and commitment to religio-political guidance from the pulpit are also common traits. Paisley's separatist outlook, however, has more in common with the Liberal traditional Presbyterians who also regarded themselves as an 'outgroup'.²³³ The drive for Protestant unity that was the critical feature of nineteenth-century Conservative evangelicalism and which became Johnston's crusade is not a feature of Paisleyism. This appears to be more of a hybrid that draws on aspects of both Liberal and Conservative nineteenth-century evangelical Presbyterianism. Paisleyism developed by way of fundamentalism, in opposition to the Irish Presbyterian Church's acceptance of higher criticism, realigning itself to react to the religio-political stimuli of the modern day. Worldviews evolve, adapt and change to meet new demands. The synthesis of evangelicalism and politics in the Ulster preaching tradition remains, however, constant.

²³³ Chapter 2, pp.141-2; G. Peatling, 'Whatever happened to Presbyterian radicalism?', p.158.

CHAPTER FOUR

Cultural Identity: the Fusion of Evangelicalism and Orangeism

The argument in this chapter is that the essence of Protestant cultural identity, which was absorbed into Unionism in the early twentieth century, lies in the fusion of evangelicalism with the values and beliefs of Orangeism as observed by Johnston and his followers. It is further argued that the loyalist organisations became interlinked in the period between 1859 and 1885 to form a chain of cultural identity. Before that period, though these organisations shared a common background of popular Orangeism, they maintained separate identities and agendas and focussed on separate historical narratives. These narratives included the myths relating to the plantation of Ulster, the Williamite wars and the siege of Londonderry and underpinned the 'imagined community' which arguably exists in Ulster.¹ These myths have 'determined the character of the actual practices, values, and orientations which fill out loyalist discourse: a form of loyalty to the British crown, a code of conservative moral values and, most problematically, anti Catholicism'.² Closer co-operation and common purpose in the period between 1859 and 1885 aided the formation of a more collective identity.

The loyalist organisation of the Apprentice Boys of Londonderry in this period will be used as a case study to observe this process. The Protestant organisation underwent a major transformation during this period, in part due to the influence of

¹ B. Anderson, *Imagined communities* (London: Verso, 1994), p.26; D. Cairns, 'The Object of Sectarianism: The Material Reality of Sectarianism in Ulster Loyalism', *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 6, no. 3 (2000), p.440.

² Cairns, 'Object of Sectarianism' p.440.

William Johnston and other key evangelical individuals but also due to the regular input of evangelical Conservative Protestant clergy. This crucial fusing of the elements of evangelical religion and Orange ideology together with the enabling function of evangelical unity and activism produced a chain of identity so strong that it has held its relevance into the twenty-first century.

The chapter emphasises that William Johnston was a key figure in the Orange Order and the Black Preceptory during the 1860s and a member of considerable influence in the Apprentice Boys from 1860. Under his aegis the loyalist organisations were brought together in evangelical unity and political consensus, their combined imagery providing a very specific cultural identity (as discussed in Chapter Five.) The first section considers the separate development of the Apprentice Boys' association. The second concentrates on the ideology of Loyalism and the concept of collective identity, and highlights the difference between the Orange Order and the Apprentice Boys' organisation. The third focuses on the evangelical aspect of the Apprentice Boys concentrating on the speeches in the secular celebration. The fourth concentrates on the political development of the Apprentice Boys, reflected in their discourse, over the period between 1859 and 1885 during which Apprentice Boys and the Orange Order came to share the same religio-political agenda.

Development of the Apprentice Boys' Clubs

The development of the Apprentice Boys' clubs was sporadic with social clubs appearing and disappearing over a long period. It was regarded as the oldest of the Ulster Loyalist societies which had emerged to commemorate the military victories of William III and the constitutional advances during his reign. All these

societies celebrated in the manner of traditional Orangeism but the siege narrative, although part of the wider mythology of Loyalism, was commemorated in Londonderry by the Apprentice Boys. The order of formation within the Loyalist fraternity was the Apprentice Boys (1714), the Orange Order (1795), and the Black Preceptory (1802) – though in the case of the last two, it has been argued, these societies had evolved from earlier, less structured associations.³ The Black Preceptory had definite connections to the Orange Order although this was contested for a time.⁴ To be an Apprentice Boy, however, it was not necessary to be a member of the Orange Order, though there was a significant overlap. Being sympathetic to the popular culture of Orangeism was implicit.

Short-lived societies came and went during the eighteenth century with the militia undertaking the organisation of the commemorations. In 1813 an Apprentice Boys' Club was established in Dublin with a Londonderry club following in 1814; the latter, again, was transitory. The Dublin association was described as the equivalent of the Pitt Club, consisting of members of 'highly respectable Society' who were descendants of those who had defended Londonderry in 1689. The Londonderry Club members were artisans and the foundation of the club was possibly a result of a meeting of freemen and freeholders held on 8 February 1814 'which had drawn up an address condemning the Dublin Catholic Board'.⁵ Both clubs could therefore be regarded as having a loose political affiliation resulting from a common attachment to the Protestant Constitution and opposition to the threat of Catholic emancipation.

³ K. Haddick-Flynn, *Orangeism: The making of a tradition* (Dublin: Wolfhound Press, 1999), pp.132-141, 357.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p.357.

⁵ J. Graham, *Derriana, Consisting of a History of the Siege of Londonderry and Defence of Enniskillen, in 1688 and 1689 with Historical Poetry and Biographical Notes* (Londonderry: 1823), p.160; I. McBride, *The Siege of Derry*, p.48.

References to Apprentice Boys Clubs in the early nineteenth century are patchy and brief. According to Sibbett, after the 1823 Shutting of the Gates commemoration, there was report of a 'movement underway to perpetuate the observance of the anniversary'.⁶ *The Times* of 1824 describes the assembling of the Apprentice Boys and Londonderry yeomanry for a ceremony which included the 'blowing up' of Lundy and de Rosen, the Marshall General in the French army supporting James, in effigy. After the ceremonies about 100 Apprentice Boys spent the evening at Mr. Alexander's outside Bishop's Gate and upwards of 60 junior Apprentice Boys met at Freeman's Tavern.⁷ The *Belfast News-Letter* refers to the involvement of the 'Apprentice Boys' Clubs' in 1828⁸ and Colby's Ordnance Survey referred to three clubs being in existence in the early 1830s including the No Surrender Club which had been established in 1824.⁹ The Apprentice Boys of Londonderry Club resurfaced in 1835.

These references coincided with periods when feelings were running high about emancipation, repeal of the Union and the Irish Church Bill. In 1828, the commemorations, which featured the unveiling of Walker's testimonial, involved a much larger number of participants as people arrived from much greater distances than the surrounding countryside. The fact that numbers were high, based on the pattern of later events, probably suggested a concern about Protestant issues and a need to demonstrate this on the streets. In both 1824 and 1828, the speeches indicated a high level of concern about the power of the Catholic Association.¹⁰

⁶ R. M. Sibbett, *Orangeism in Ireland and throughout the Empire* (London: 1939), 2, p.226

⁷ *The Times*, 30 Dec. 1824.

⁸ *BNL*, 15 Aug. 1828.

⁹ McBride, *Siege of Derry*, p.49.

¹⁰ *The Times*, 30 Dec. 1824; *BNL*, 15 Aug. 1828.

Indicative of such concern was the establishment, in 1828, of a Brunswick Club in Londonderry, a movement opposed to Catholic relief, which suggests that the Apprentice Boys' clubs did not directly fulfil this function. However, in 1831, there was an Apprentice Boys' 'Repeal of the Union Meeting' where resolutions against Catholic relief were prepared for reading in the House of Lords.¹¹ The need to commit to loyal and constitutional issues and institutions under threat in this period might well have triggered the establishment of the Apprentice Boys' Club in 1835. This was a particularly active period for the forming of Protestant defence bodies in England as well as Ireland.¹² The clubs may not have had a party or defined political agenda, but from the discourse surrounding them there was definitely a political sub-text related to constitutional protection.

The Apprentice Boys' club formed in 1835 was the precursor of the club active in the late nineteenth century and shared the same guidelines. Its rules and bye-laws were appended to the evidence given at the 1870 Inquiry into the riots and disturbances in Londonderry.¹³ Here it was stated that the regulations attached were agreed on 8 October 1835 at the Apprentice Boys of Londonderry Club, formed in that year, and that these rules and bye-laws were then affirmed and adopted as the rules of the associated clubs at a meeting of the General Committee on 7 December 1867.

The 1867 approved version stated that 'the club was established for the purpose of celebrating the anniversaries of the Shutting of the Gates and Relief of Londonderry and thus handing down to posterity the memorable events of the

¹¹ BNL, 1 Feb. 1831.

¹² J. Wolfe, *The Protestant Crusade*, p.6.

¹³ *Inquiry, Londonderry*, Appendix No. 12, pp.205-6.

years 1688 and 1689.¹⁴ It stated also that the formation of this club was not 'actuated by factious or sectarian feeling, which we consider would be at variance with the cause of civil and religious liberty, the celebration of its establishment (i.e. religious and civil liberty) being the especial purpose for which our society was instituted'.¹⁵ It is likely that these sentiments, recorded as the first and second rules of the club, were included in the 1835 version as they were also listed in similar order in those of the earlier No Surrender Club.¹⁶

Each section of the printed regulations of 1835 (approved and reprinted in 1867) was headed by a biblical reference:

'Yes, I will sing aloud of Thy mercy; for Thou has been my defence and refuge in the day of my troubles', *Psalms* 59: 16

'Thou hast given a banner to them that fear Thee, that it may be displayed because of Thy truth', *Psalms* 60:4

'Love the Brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the King, *1 Peter* 2:17

'Thou shalt therefore keep this ordinance in his season from year to year', *Exodus* 13.10

'Surely I will remember Thy wonders of old', *Psalms* 77:11

'Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us', *Psalms* 78:3.

These references highlighted the covenantal aspect of the Apprentice Boys' loyalism. The club was under the influence of John Graham, an evangelical

¹⁴ Ibid., Appendix No. 12, p.205.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Tony Crowe, *The 150th Anniversary of The Mitchelburne Club 1854-2004* (Belfast: 2004), p.34.

Anglican minister at this period and the emphasis was therefore more militant.¹⁷ The presence of the biblical references highlighted its semi-religious nature and the fact that both religion and loyalty were woven into the fabric of the club. This was reinforced by the practice of starting and ending meetings with prayer.¹⁸ This bound together the constitutional and religious elements which shared an affinity with the Orange Order, if not its averred agenda.

During the forties and fifties, other clubs were established, named mainly after individual heroes of the siege – the Walker Club (1844), the Murray Club (1847), the Mitchelburne Club, (revived 1845), the Browning Club (1854). In what had become a pattern of transitory societies, the latter went out of existence to be revived in 1876. These clubs acted independently but although, on occasion, they co-operated, they did so on a level which highlighted their overall lack of unity. For example on 4 August 1851, the Murray Club decided to have a ball in the Corporation Hall and 'a deputation was appointed to wait on the Walker Club to get its members to co-operate'. At the same meeting it was decided that 'if the other clubs wear crimson sashes on the coming 18 (Dec.), we (will) co-operate with them'.¹⁹ At this stage, therefore, there was no Apprentice Boys' association, just a small number of autonomous social clubs which focussed on the local narrative.

However, at a general meeting on 22 November 1859, the General Committee of the Apprentice Boys of Londonderry was formed, although there was some evidence that attempts were made to get a 'Grand Club' underway earlier in the

¹⁷ See Chapter 5, pp.305-6.

¹⁸ C. D. Milligan, *The Murray Club Centenary* (Londonderry: Londonderry Sentinel, 1947), p.14.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.22

fifties without success.²⁰ Five clubs attended the meeting: The Apprentice Boys of Londonderry Club, Walker, Murray, Williamite, and the Mitchelburne/Baker Clubs. (The Baker Club, another transitory club, was apparently combined with the Mitchelburne Club in 1859.) At this point there was evidence of the desire for greater cohesion and united support of constitutional issues without a notable party political agenda.

John Hempton was president of the Mitchelburne Club at this period, 1857-60, having had involvement with the clubs generally for ten years. He was evangelical in spirit using his influence to improve unity between Episcopalians and Presbyterians by introducing the practice of using Presbyterian meeting houses as venues for commemorative services as well as the cathedral. He encouraged the holding of tea parties in place of the older custom of bottle and glass parties, and introduced women to the evening social events. He was strong in his support of constitutional liberties testing the legality of the government imposed ban against firing field pieces in the ceremonies (August 1861) and incurring a summons as a result.²¹

The membership was not all Conservative at this point. Hempton commented on the political mix of the assembly in 1862, emphasising its lack of partisanship for any particular political party.²² However, he withdrew the Mitchelburne Club from the general committee in 1863, highlighting the lack of a common agenda, stating that he did not want to be involved in any political complications by which he meant party political, as the organisation was perceived as becoming more

²⁰ Ibid., p.11.

²¹ LS, 20 Dec. 1861.

²² Ibid., 19 Dec. 1862.

Conservative in complexion.²³ In 1865, he had fallen out of favour having voted for the Liberal candidate and incurred the disapproval of his fellows.²⁴ At this period, there was a definite move away from the inclusiveness that embraced all political parties as well as Protestant denominations to a more defined affinity to evangelical Conservatism.

From 1859, there was a definite desire for greater cohesion in the loosely structured society and from 1860, with the involvement of William Johnston, Stewart Blacker, John Guy Ferguson and others who were both evangelical and Conservative in their view of the constitution, it became a more structured, co-ordinated unit with loyalty and religion integral to its existence. It did, however, while maintaining its separate civic role, become more strongly associated with the evangelical activism of an element within the Orange Order. Overlap in membership between the Apprentice Boys and the Orange Order was not a new phenomenon; early influential members of the former, such as Sir Robert Bateson, William Gregg, Henry Darcus and Harvey Nicholson, were also members of the latter.²⁵ However, the level of evangelical activism, significant in members such as Johnston, Ferguson, Blacker and John Finlay (editor of the *Sentinel*), was more pronounced in those involved in the 1860s. Furthermore, the more structured development which united the Apprentice Boys' clubs mirrored the changes that were taking place in the Orange Order during this period.

While many members of the Orange Order might have regarded their lodge as merely a social club, others regarded it as a vehicle for protecting a way of life. The long-term implications of O'Connell's campaigns were an effective spur to

²³ Crowe, *Mitchelburne Club*, p.40.

²⁴ *Inquiry, Londonderry*, min. 818; T. G. Fraser, 'The Siege', p.395; See Chapter 3, p.193.

²⁵ Orange Demonstration, *The Times*, 19 Sept. 1854.

action and, having experienced the difficulties of the thirties with the dissolving of the Grand Lodge of Ireland and the agitation for repeal of the Union in the forties, it became evident that a more structured organisation was necessary. In the fifties and sixties, the Order began organising itself into what one scholar has called 'a machine to gather and concentrate public opinion, as well as to provide defence against resurgent Ribbonism and possible rebellion'.²⁶ The growth of Liberalism in the sixties was also causing concern. The use of press, public meetings, contact with influential persons, and representation in parliament became part of the more efficient machinery of opposition. Order, discipline and ready communication were necessary for the institution to be effective.²⁷ Such organisational changes also became an aspect of the Apprentice Boys' clubs. This reflected an overlap of leading members of both the Orange Order and Apprentice Boys creating a common mindset and drive to action.

In 1865 and 1869 charters were granted by the general committee for the No Surrender Club, revived, and Campsie Clubs respectively, and in 1870 the Baker Club changed its name to the Mitchelburne Club. The clubs became structured into more of an organisation as the role of Governor was introduced in 1867. This was filled by John Guy Ferguson, the Chairman of the General Committee, though this role seems to have gone into abeyance between 1871 and 1876. The organisation evolved, therefore, from examples of individual initiative in the eighteenth century, to a loose confederation of clubs in the early nineteenth century, some fading from prominence to be revived at a later date, to a more structured, co-ordinated unit with a definite Conservative identity, evangelical unity and Orange agenda.

²⁶ Rev. M. W. Dewar, *Orangeism: A New Historical Appreciation* (Belfast: 1967), p.138.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.138.

Ideology

Though late nineteenth-century Loyalism is the focus of the thesis, studies of the twentieth-century concept provide insight. The Loyalist Orders, it has been argued, shared a common ideological structure in the twentieth century.²⁸ Wright, however, separated religio-political ideology from that of twentieth-century Loyalism in his article on Protestant ideology and politics.²⁹ Adherents to the religio-political outlook, he argued, regarded Ulster politics as 'a battle between two religious systems carried out in the field of politics'.³⁰ This was the position of Johnstonian Orangeism. Loyalists, in the twentieth century context, Wright added, regarded the conflict in terms of national affiliations.³¹ Religio-politicism, he believed, had its roots in a positive commitment to a form of Protestantism whereas the nationalist outlook within Loyalism was based solely on a negative view of Roman Catholicism. In the late nineteenth century, however, this split was not evident and the strong presence of religio-politicism, readily discernible in the Apprentice Boys organisation in the mid 1860s, was reinforced by opposition to Irish nationalism in the 1880s. The strands of religio-politicism and the Protestant community's opposition to home rule were mutually reinforcing, not separate.

In this thesis, the focus is on the transition within Loyalism from the conservative values of popular Orangeism to those of a more militant religio-politicism. The ideology of popular Orangeism developed from an amalgam of religious and political influences. From a religious perspective, the tradition was rooted in the Reformation of the sixteenth century, moulded by the covenanting tradition and

²⁸ Jennifer Todd, 'Two Traditions in Unionist Political Culture', *Irish Political Studies*, no. 2 (1987)p.10.

²⁹ F. Wright, 'Protestant ideology', pp.223-243.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p.223.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p.233.

blessed by divine approval in the siege of Derry in the seventeenth. Its development reflected the early need for public banding together for protection, a history of ongoing sectarian competition and conflict. Some scholars think the dislocation of industrialisation contributed to its growth.³² But it did not have an averred political agenda. Evangelical preaching in the nineteenth century, as argued in Chapter Three, linked the evangelical and covenantal elements reinforcing their importance and, during the process, cross-fertilised religious and political aspects, imbuing conservative politics not only with religious respectability but also with religious obligation. There was a general evangelical ethos in the Apprentice Boys' Clubs and this encouraged the positive reception of Johnston's arguments on Protestant duty and evangelical activism.

Twentieth century studies which consider the importance of the element of religion in loyalist identity are complex and ambivalent. A case was made by Roberts that the Orange Order might reasonably be regarded as a religious organisation as it satisfied the criteria demanded by both Glock and Yinger in their definition of religion. Roberts applied Glock's criteria and argued that Orangeism had the ideology of religion, though this was not exclusive and a large proportion of its beliefs were concurrently upheld by complementary non-religious institutions. In applying Yinger's criteria, Roberts argued that Orangeism could be studied as a religious movement as long as there was an understanding that its beliefs and values were not entirely religious.³³ Orange ideology was a complex mixture of such religious and political beliefs and values. Wright, in 'Protestant ideology and

³² D. Miller, *Queen's Rebels*; I. Budge, C. O'Leary, *Belfast: Approach to Crisis. A Study of Belfast Politics 1613-1970* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1973), p.28; H. Senior, *Orangeism in Ireland and Britain 1795-1835* (London: Routledge, 1966); P. Gibbon, *The Origins of Ulster Unionism*; H. Patterson, *Class Conflict and Sectarianism: the Protestant Working Class and the Belfast Labour Movement 1868-1980* (Belfast: Blackstaff, 1980).

³³ D. A. Roberts, 'The Orange Order in Ireland: a religious institution?', *British Journal of Sociology*, 22, no. 3 (1971).

politics in Ulster' linked modern day Orange ideology with a type of 'evangelical fundamentalism', equating evangelicalism with the emphasis on the doctrine of salvation by grace alone through faith, and fundamentalism with the belief that the Bible was the Word of God 'not merely a book about God'.³⁴ Todd, considering the twentieth-century phenomenon of Loyalism, believed it derived 'its intelligibility and power from the evangelical fundamentalist religious tradition'.³⁵ Mitchel regarded Orangeism as espousing a form of 'closed evangelicalism' – closed in that it was ideologically impervious to alternative evangelical interpretations of the Northern Ireland conflict. He believed it could not be regarded as truly evangelical because 'it is ideologically incapable of creating distance from the goals of Unionism'.³⁶ Twentieth century Loyalism, it would appear, although exhibiting evangelical characteristics, has a stronger party political emphasis.

However, a significant element of Orangeism in the late nineteenth-century was evangelical and religio-political rather than party political. Significantly, its political alliance with the Conservative party was conditional upon the party's allegiance to the defence of the Protestant Constitution and Crown in Britain. Anti-Catholicism, an aspect of both politics and religion and central to the ideology, was focussed on the system (rather than the individual Catholic) as evil, though McFarland and Bruce refer to a rougher, element within Orangeism and the Apprentice Boys Association which would have been less likely to adhere to this distinction.³⁷ Nonetheless, there were many of Johnston's ilk, a more sophisticated educated element linked with the many artisans who made up the bulk of these

³⁴ Wright, 'Protestant Ideology' p.227.

³⁵ Todd, 'Two Traditions in Unionist Political Culture' p.3.

³⁶ P. Mitchel, *Evangelicalism and National Identity in Ulster, 1921-1998* (Oxford: OUP, 2003), pp. 131, 168.

³⁷ E. W. McFarland, *Protestants First: Orangeism in Nineteenth Century Scotland* (Edinburgh: EUP, 1991), pp. 1-10; Steve Bruce, *Paisley: religion and politics in Northern Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 197.

organisations, who encouraged a clearly less superficial religious affiliation and described their politics as Protestant politics.³⁸ As Bruce states, in 1900 the average Orangeman or Apprentice Boy was markedly more likely to have been an evangelical Christian than his counterpart in 1990.³⁹ This common evangelicalism facilitated unity between the loyalist organisations.

A loyalist order that was exclusively evangelical was the Black Preceptory which had Johnston as its Sovereign Master. The preceptory had its origins in the mid eighteenth century Scottish organisations of the Imperial Grand Black Lodge of Knights of Malta and the Parent Black Lodge of the Universe. From these roots developed the Grand Black Orange Lodge of Ireland, founded in 1802 and surviving till 1814, and the Royal Britannic Association of Knights of Israel which was in existence before 1810, and still exists in Canada. This later organisation was described as 'an organisation founded or established for the maintenance and propagation of pure evangelical truth, as contained in the written word of God, as well as the dissemination of strict moral ethics: in fact, the system, as propounded, may, with truth, be described as religion veiled in allegory and illustrated by signs and symbols.'⁴⁰ The Black organisations made significant headway during the ten years that the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland was dissolved. Smaller organisations amalgamated and the Grand Black Chapter in Ireland was formed in 1846. There had been attempts stemming from the early nineteenth century to graft the higher degrees of the Black into Orangeism but with the re-establishment of the Grand Orange Lodge in 1846 strong efforts were made to disengage the Orange and Black, particularly since the former had no control of the latter.⁴¹

³⁸ See Chapter 1, p.72.

³⁹ Bruce, *Paisley*, p.197.

⁴⁰ A. McClelland, 'The Origin of the Imperial Black Chapter of the British Commonwealth', *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, XCVIII(1968), pp.191-2.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p.195.

Johnston became Grand Sovereign Master in 1855 combining this with key posts in the Orange Order. By the mid sixties he had become a driving force in the Orange Order⁴² but despite his efforts, he had eventually had to concede the strict separation of the two organisations. The Black Preceptory remained, however, an integral part of the Loyalist brotherhood and Johnston was effective in establishing the organisation and developing it into the Imperial Grand Black Chapter of the British Commonwealth at the turn of the century. During the period of Johnston's influence, branches of the Black tightened their affiliation with the Apprentice Boys association, through dining, making presentations and marching in the processions.⁴³ Johnston was instrumental in uniting the loyalist orders and enabling the formation of a collective identity.

The anniversaries of the Apprentice Boys' organisation celebrated the relief of Derry by William III's navy so there was a natural connection to Orangeism reinforced by a tradition dating back to the Williamite festivals of the seventeenth century. Ian McBride has suggested that the earliest celebrations of the siege, in the previous century, should be viewed in the context of 'a Whig political culture' that had been constructed in England and exported to Ireland and other parts of the Empire. He stated that the Whig establishment 'legitimated its position by reference to a conservative interpretation of Revolution (1688) principles'. These principles, he argued, were highlighted in state sponsored festivals which were used to reinforce the existing political and social order, an aspect of which were the 'discourses of use and instruction'.⁴⁴ The Williamite festivals had been

⁴² S. Farrell, 'Recapturing the Flag: The Campaign to Repeal the Party Processions Act, 1860-72', *Eire-Ireland*, XXXII, no. Summer/Fall (1997), p.53.

⁴³ LS, 15 Aug. 1882.

⁴⁴ See Chapter 3, p.175.

assimilated into an older tradition of street theatre thus connecting Whiggery and popular anti-Catholicism. (These traditions often included effigy burning, a feature of the Apprentice Boys' celebration of the 'shutting of the gates'.)⁴⁵ Therefore the roots of the Apprentice Boy's commemorations were in the local narrative expressed through the earlier popular culture of constitutional Orangeism.

Though quite separate entities, even before the mid sixties the Apprentice Boys organisation and the Orange Order had much in common. Both regarded commemoration as a requirement of reformed religion and had a mythology based on William III and Reformation Protestantism in which the siege of Londonderry was a vital component. The function of the Apprentice Boys of Derry was to commemorate the siege anniversaries, the Orange Order to protect the Protestant religion, alongside the political objectives of maintaining Protestant power and of preserving the British Empire and Protestant way of life. The celebration of the siege of Derry was central to the tradition of Orangeism, fulfilling both aspects of Orange legitimisation - being both 'faithful to the faith' and 'faithful to the past'.⁴⁶ It illustrated also the experiential aspect of God's hand in history, with the perception of his direct involvement in the fate of Derry Protestants.⁴⁷ This highlighted and justified the determination to resist compromise integral to both Orangeism and evangelicalism, illustrated by the cry of those besieged in Derry in 1688 - 'No surrender'.

This 'no compromise' attitude was illustrated by actively pursuing what was perceived to be right whilst opposing evil - Roman Catholicism. Under Johnston's influence it became Roman Catholicism as a religious and political system and the

⁴⁵ McBride, *Siege of Derry*, pp.34-5.

⁴⁶ Mitchel, *Evangelicalism and National Identity*, pp.138-45.

⁴⁷ See Chapter 3, pp.204-5.

importance of the political sphere was emphasised. The culture within the organisations was evangelical, upholding the central importance of the Bible and the significance of the Cross while maintaining a loose connection to a theological core of basic reformed beliefs such as those proposed by the Evangelical Alliance.⁴⁸ This combination of Loyalism and militant evangelicalism reinforced the desire for Protestant unity common to both concepts.

The concept of the loyalist community past and present can be related to 'the idea of a sociological organism moving calendrically through homogeneous, empty time' seeking mass support to maintain its existence.⁴⁹ The myths reflected in the banners of the loyalist organisations made statements about and underpinned the community's identity. The Black organisation approached the concept of collective identity from the perspective of Biblical metaphor. Anthony Buckley argues that the themes running through the imagery of the banners linked Ulster Protestants with the idea of God's chosen people.⁵⁰ The ideology of the Black provided biblical authority for the ideals of Protestant martyrs and the protection of Protestantism associated with the Orange Order and the example of faith with action that constituted the narrative of the Londonderry siege. Religion, history and politics were interwoven in the bid to establish and maintain Ulster Protestant cultural identity.

Worldview of the Speeches

The discourse that occurred in the more secular part of the anniversary ceremonies reflected this process highlighting the religious nature of the

⁴⁸ See Chapter 1, p.68.

⁴⁹ Anderson, *Imagined communities*, p.26; Cairns, 'Object of Sectarianism' p.441.

⁵⁰ A. Buckley, 'The Chosen Few', p.22.

organisation and its developing political nature. These speeches immediately followed the church service and were incorporated into formal meetings and social events, including tea parties, dinners, soirees or balls that were part of the flexible format of commemoration. These events are labelled as secular because they were under the aegis of the governor of the Apprentice Boys rather than the bishop or Presbyterian minister. However, that does not mean that the meetings were not imbued with religious significance. Neither does it suggest that the occasions were lacking in clerical input. They just did not represent the traditional concept of official religion.

The purpose of the meeting immediately after the religious service was to thank the anniversary preacher and often to speak about the message conveyed in the sermon or the nature of the sermon itself, for example, when the sermon was regarded as being a particularly eloquent 'gospel sermon' or 'truly orthodox and highly Protestant'.⁵¹ The meeting provided an opportunity to state who the Apprentice Boys were and reaffirm their principles. Expecting their activities to be quoted in the local and even national Press, it was an opportunity to explain themselves. When criticised by the Liberal press for planning to hold 'party' (meaning Conservative) celebrations in the aftermath of the death of the Prince Consort in 1861, William Johnston stated that 'he held the present meeting as much a religious ceremony as any held today'.⁵² He added that they were conservative in wishing to preserve what was good, and liberal in being willing to reassess their position if errors had been made. In fact, by the mid 1860s, the body of the organisation would have been Conservative but the point being made

⁵¹ LS, 21 Dec. 1866, 20 Dec. 1867.

⁵² Ibid., 20 Dec. 1861.

was that the celebrations reflected conservative Protestant religious issues not party political issues.

This was a claim that was maintained throughout the years 1859 – 85, that the Apprentice Boys might be conservative because they held traditional values but were Protestants first, meaning that they would always put the preservation of the Protestant religion and Protestant values before any party wrangling.⁵³ (The same claim was also made for evangelical Orangeism.⁵⁴) This meant that the emphasis of the association was evangelical rather than Conservative. It also highlighted the Apprentice Boys' disinclination to separate religion and politics. By maintaining the link they ensured that religious criteria were used for political decision-making. Politics were for them a natural extension of religious convictions; they believed there should be no separation. In the 1880s, the need was underlined for MPs who 'were not hirelings' but were Protestants first and could be relied on to protect 'the remains' of the Constitution. Nonetheless, this desire for preservation rather than liberal evolution of the Constitution pointed them inevitably in the direction of the Conservative party.⁵⁵

The change from a more broadly-based evangelical and loosely structured local organisation to a militant evangelical, tightly-structured, Ulster-wide format appears to stem from Johnston's involvement in December 1860. Then William Johnston rejected the suggestion that the Derry celebrations were purely local events believing they had great significance for all Protestant people. He said that not only Protestants across the North of Ireland but those in Canada were giving

⁵³ Ibid., 20 Dec. 1879.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 14 Aug. 1883.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 14 Aug. 1883, 13 Aug. 1885.

their support for Derry's stand against the Party Emblems Bill.⁵⁶ The implications for Protestant identity that the event held for Ulster as a whole was recognised by Johnston and those who shared his desire for Protestant unity. This led to a less local mindset, to the awareness on the part of Apprentice Boys that they were setting an example for Protestant Ulster. It also led to the Apprentice Boys' constitution being eventually changed so that those outside Derry could take part in the commemorations.⁵⁷

Johnston's involvement, however, coincided with that of John Guy Ferguson. Ferguson was to become the governor of the association in 1867. He was the diocesan architect and was responsible for the design of many local buildings including the Guildhall (1890), the Apprentice Boy's Memorial Hall (1877), St. Augustine's Church (1872) and the chancel of the cathedral (c1886). He had spent his early life in America, designing the Philadelphia Orange Hall before his return to Londonderry c1860. He was an evangelical Conservative but, in 1861, regarded the association as apolitical. He referred to his fellow members as being 'bound by common bonds of evangelical truth in religion, not bound to party in politics.'⁵⁸ He succeeded the Liberal John Hempton as the leading light in the local organisation in the early sixties and was regarded as a gifted orator and skilful campaigner. He and Johnston developed a mutually supportive relationship in both the Apprentice Boys and the Orange Order.⁵⁹

This stiffening of resolve with the involvement of Johnston and Ferguson may have stimulated Lord Claud Hamilton's interest in the organisation as a political

⁵⁶ Ibid., 21 Dec. 1860.

⁵⁷ *Inquiry, Londonderry*, min. 5536.

⁵⁸ LS, 20 Dec. 1861.

⁵⁹ Diary, 27 Jul., 3 Aug., 4 Aug. 1869; Orange meeting at Lisburn, 12 Jul. 1870; Gt. Protestant Demonstration, 22 May, 1869; BNL 24 May 1869.

vehicle, noted as becoming evident from the mid 1860s.⁶⁰ A significant change to the format of the celebrations took place towards the end of the decade when the customary vote of thanks to the preacher started to be accompanied by formal resolutions of a political character. This change stems from the run up to disestablishment of the Church of Ireland (1869) when there was a growing realisation of the threat to Protestant institutions particularly from Gladstonian Liberalism, and concerns about the implications of the 1867 Reform Act and the local split in the Protestant vote.⁶¹ The new practice of making formal resolutions at the Apprentice Boys' meetings seemed to signify their establishment as a power group aiming to inform wider opinion and stand up for Protestant issues. The resolutions tended to be a reflection of the issues of the day, for example, opposition to government, the Irish Church Bill and latterly to home rule.⁶²

The speeches at the soiree or tea parties tended to be uplifting stories of the siege, lauding the courage and endurance of their ancestors and thanking God for his perceived favour. Again, when issues of the day required it, they moved beyond toasts and 'sentiments' to deal directly with threatening issues. Rev. Richard Babington's speech on the dangers of communism in 1882 would fit into this category as would Lord Claud Hamilton's speech on the Protestant party being the defeated party in Ulster in 1884.⁶³

The speeches give insight into various changes in organisational and social aspects. Rev. Edward Dougherty (Anglican) gave a sketch of the rise of the organisation from the less consolidated structure of the early days. He

⁶⁰ *Inquiry, Londonderry*, min.2177.

⁶¹ See Chapter 2, p.115.

⁶² *LS*, 14 Aug. 1868, 15 Aug. 1882.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 20 Dec. 1884, 19 Dec. 1882.

emphasised how commemorations were at low ebb in 1855 before the General Committee was formed to co-ordinate events in 1856.⁶⁴ Centralisation followed with the election of its first governor in 1867. This was, of course, John Guy Ferguson. Edward Dougherty (Anglican) gave an insight into his own past by telling how he had been engaged in firing the guns at an Apprentice Boys' commemoration in 1849 only five days before being ordained.⁶⁵ This suggests how relatively respectable taking such an active part in the secular commemorations must have been despite the deterioration of inter-community relations before the split in the Protestant vote. In the sixties, with the rising militancy of political objections and the co-operation between Roman Catholics and Liberal Presbyterians, the goal posts changed.

The nature of the interaction between the Dublin and Derry clubs also became more extensive. Members such as Crossle and Black, ex governors of the Dublin Club, regularly attended the Derry events and John Guy Ferguson certainly attended the Dublin club at least once, in 1869, as a member.⁶⁶ Edward Dougherty, after the death of Stewart Blacker, a frequent participant at the Derry commemorations, stated that he had originally met Stewart Blacker at the Dublin Club.⁶⁷ Blacker was part of the hierarchy of the Dublin club whose members were also leaders within the Orange Order. From 1861, he became Grand Master for county Londonderry. Johnston stated that Derry would now have sound leadership.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ Ibid., 14 Aug. 1877.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 20 Dec. 1884.

⁶⁶ Minute Book 1869, Apprentice Boys (Dublin).

⁶⁷ LS, 20 Dec. 1881.

⁶⁸ DP, 14 June 1861.

There was always an element of common membership between the Apprentice Boys organisation and the Orange Order but by 1871 the leaders of the organisation also had senior positions in the Order which had re-established itself in Britain generally as a response to Fenianism.⁶⁹ The City of Londonderry Grand Committee of the Orange Lodge for 1872 named William Johnston as Grand Master, Rev. Richard Babington as Grand Chaplain and Rev. Robert C. Donnell as Deputy Grand Chaplain.⁷⁰ John Guy Ferguson also held positions on the Grand Committee in the early 1870s.⁷¹ With the exception of Johnston, all also had official roles within the Apprentice Boys with Richard Babington (Anglican), chaplain to the Apprentice Boys, giving several of the anniversary sermons and Robert Donnell (Presbyterian), also chaplain, speaking at the meetings after the church services. Johnston had no official role but kept in contact with Ferguson, especially in the periods when there were likely to be difficulties.⁷² He appeared to take the lead when attempts were made to restrict the anniversary programme.⁷³ While the Orange link was not unusual in itself, the activism of Johnston, Ferguson, Donnell, Babington and others in both arenas set them apart from earlier leaders.

The character of the speeches reflected a mixed Protestant membership. The evidence suggests that Presbyterians made up two thirds of the three hundred members during the 1860s, excluding the two hundred honorary members.⁷⁴ In the early 1860s Liberal Presbyterian members either dropped out or became more

⁶⁹ A. Peach, 'Poverty, Religion and Prejudice in Nineteenth Century Britain: The Catholic Irish in Birmingham 1800-c1880' (PhD, De Montfort 2000), p.300.

⁷⁰ GOLI Report, 4-5 Dec. 1872, pp.17-18.

⁷¹ GOLI Reports, 1868, 1869, 1871.

⁷² Diaries, 27 July, 3 Aug. 1869, PRONI D880/2/21.

⁷³ *The Times*, 14 Aug. 1871.

⁷⁴ *Inquiry, Londonderry*, mins. 5574, 5977.

Conservative in their allegiance.⁷⁵ Religious guidance regularly made reference to the necessity for Protestant unity.⁷⁶ Spiritual input appears to have come initially from the Presbyterian chaplain Robert Donnell but the Church of Ireland curate Edward Dougherty was also an early member. As stated, both had Orange affiliations. Up to 1867, there appears to have been comparatively little representation from the clergy, gentry and merchants of Derry.⁷⁷ The Apprentice Boys were described as all respectable tradesmen from the city with honorary members that included 'the first noblemen in the land'.⁷⁸ This referred to such peers as the Duke of Abercorn and the Earl of Enniskillen. There was a local connection with the former and the latter was the president of the Dublin club.

Disestablishment widened the membership base as the artisans were joined by other classes, not only in the Apprentice Boys but in organisations like the Londonderry Working Men's Protestant Defence Association. Artisans had the vote so guidance was perceived as being necessary by the more educated in the organisation. In December 1868, Robert Sawyer, Treasurer of the organisation and a Presbyterian, reported at the soiree at the conclusion of the commemoration event, that the Londonderry Working Men's Protestant Defence Association had done sterling work in instructing the artisans in the great political questions of the day and was gratified that at the recent election they had voted in the cause of Protestantism.⁷⁹ From 1868, there was a greater representation from the cathedral in the more secular part of the Apprentice Boys' commemoration. Dougherty (Anglican) was a regular attendee at meetings and social events but Babington (Anglican) joined in 1868 and went so far as to participate in the procession to the

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, mins. 5030, 2177.

⁷⁶ *LS*, 20 Dec. 1861, 16 Aug. 1870.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 13 Aug. 1867.

⁷⁸ *Inquiry, Londonderry*, min. 5909.

⁷⁹ *LS*, 22 Dec. 1868.

cathedral as well as involving himself in the meetings and soirees.⁸⁰ (This was also the period when he took up the position of Grand Chaplain in the Orange Order.⁸¹)

At this point, Rev. Richard Babington (Anglican) described the Apprentice Boys as 'a united Protestant phalanx' with express commitment to Protestant Union and opposed to 'Romanist, ritualist, voluntary and infidel attack on our churches'.⁸² This claim registered a sea change for the local group which had previously concentrated on celebrating civic anniversaries. The agenda now had much in common with that of the Orange Order. The organisations had become mutually supportive. For example, in June 1871 an application was made by the Apprentice Boys for monetary support to alleviate the costs of prosecutions resulting from members defying the ban on parades in December the previous year. Funds were raised by subscription from the Orange membership to pay the costs of the Apprentice Boys involved.⁸³ Orange bands from many parts of Ulster attended the commemorations and the Maiden City Orange lodges marched in the parades. And, on 1st November, 1883, representatives from the Apprentice Boys invited the Orange hierarchy to join them in seizing the Corporation Hall to avoid its use by Charles Dawson, the Lord Mayor of Dublin, perceived as being an unwarranted invasion of their territory.

Delegations from the Orange Lodges of the Empire, Canada, USA, Australia and New Zealand as well as from Glasgow, etc. were periodic visitors at the anniversaries.⁸⁴ Although branches of the Apprentice Boys were set up in other countries, candidates could only become official members after initiation within the

⁸⁰ Ibid., 16 Aug. 1870.

⁸¹ GOLI Report, 9-10 Dec. 1868, Dublin.

⁸² LS, 14 Aug. 1868.

⁸³ GOLI Report, June 1871.

⁸⁴ LS, 15 Aug. 1876, 13 Aug. 1885.

Derry city walls. Thus when visits to Ulster were arranged as part of the programme of the Orange Triennial Council, they were planned to accommodate participation in an anniversary commemoration. By 1884, Robert McClintock, an Apprentice Boy and Grand Master of the City of Londonderry at the time, made the point clearly in his speech that the bond between Orangeism and the Apprentice Boys 'should ever be very close indeed'.⁸⁵ At the soiree, the Dean of the cathedral, Andrew Ferguson Smyley, brother-in-law of William Alexander, raised a toast to the Orangemen of Ireland and indicated that he was at one with the Apprentice Boys' political views.⁸⁶ Earlier deans would not have attended the secular event and given support in this way.

While Andrew Smyly was High Church, the ministers who regularly attended the Apprentice Boys' events were evangelical and very much in favour of Protestant unity. Richard Babington (Anglican) stated that laymen who were critical of fellow Protestants because of their denominational affiliation were lacking in Christian and brotherly love. He regarded the jaundiced outlook of some Liberal Presbyterian ministers towards Episcopalian ministers as inappropriate to their calling. He believed the job of both in the community was to spread the Gospel and win souls to Christ. Those ministers who refused to be one in spirit had their priorities wrong: in heaven, he argued, there would be no Presbyterianism or Episcopalianism or any other 'ism' as all would be united in Christ.⁸⁷ These sentiments were especially striking when expressed just before disestablishment.

The philosophical guidelines of the organisation were based on the conviction that the siege of Derry had a central role in the battles of the Glorious Revolution and

⁸⁵ Ibid., 20 Dec. 1884.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 14 Aug. 1868.

that divine intervention was responsible for the outcome of the siege. Macaulay's narrative of the siege was favoured in the social events as well as in the pulpit.⁸⁸ It highlighted the valorous role of the city's inhabitants and the fact that the city should be regarded as an inspiring 'monument of a great deliverance'. Of further significance was Macaulay's apparent appreciation of what the city meant to Protestants of Ulster – 'what the trophy of Marathon was to the Athenians'. Robert Donnell quoted extensively from Macaulay in his speech in 1867.⁸⁹ The fact that Macaulay's version was quoted both in pulpit and secular meeting gave it particular authority.

Central to the organisation was the concept of Protestant unity. Robert Donnell reproved the recent attempt by the Liberal element of the First Presbyterian Church to 'sow dissention' in Protestant ranks. The incident with the flags and FPC⁹⁰ was regarded as political manoeuvring and the ministers compared to 'money changers in the temple'. He said that if the Apprentice Boys left off their Conservatism with their flags they would be welcomed by the session and committee of the FPC. He was suggesting that such political manoeuvring was taking precedence over religious observance. In August 1868 he spoke of the religious obligation to return John Claud Hamilton to parliament and in December 1868 talked about the duties of covenant.⁹¹ Religious and secular values were entwined, the religious giving the secular authority, especially when the speaker was a clergyman.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 20 Dec. 1864; See Chapter 3, pp.203-4.

⁸⁹ LS, 13 Aug. 1867.

⁹⁰ See Chapter 2, p.153.

⁹¹ LS, 14 Aug. 1868, 22 Dec. 1868.

While the sermons voiced the beliefs and values of the worldview, the speeches showed how the values were being interpreted in political terms. In 1864, J. Crawford (Presbyterian) said that the Revolution had gained them a free Bible. The Bible, he argued, imparted civil and religious liberties teaching all the important doctrines of civil liberty. King William, he added, had been raised up by Providence to liberate the nation.⁹² Robert Donnell (Presbyterian) added that they could take no middle path in religion or politics as their cause was truth and freedom⁹³. Views on liberalism were quite clear cut: it was believed to confound the distinction between right and wrong. In 1866, the meeting was told that the Bible gave no authority to be liberal.⁹⁴

Speaking of the Conservative defeat in the 1868 elections in Derry, Robert Donnell said outsiders might believe Liberalism held sway in the city but that was not the case. '...never since the Revolution was there such union between real Protestants and determination to hold in all their freedom and integrity the bible and the throne.'⁹⁵ He was emphasising an evangelical Conservative unity. Rev. Alexander Buchanan (Presbyterian) said of the Liberals at the same meeting that they had no religion if they believed all religions were equal. In 1868, he spoke of disestablishment saying that he could not 'stand idly by and witness the wholesale robbery of a sister church which although I may differ from in some respects holds the grand central doctrines of Christianity and preaches them as necessary for the salvation of immortal souls.'⁹⁶ He said that he had supported John Claud Hamilton in the elections emphasising that Hamilton had not only supported the *regium*

⁹² Ibid., 20 Dec. 1864.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Rev. R. C. Donnell, *LS*, 21 Dec. 1866.

⁹⁵ *LS*, 22 Dec. 1868.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

donum but wished it increased.⁹⁷ He was similarly emphasising unity and encouraging support for Conservatism.

The Anglican ministers similarly did not restrict themselves to purely religious advice. Richard Babington (Anglican) spoke of the 'great disgrace' of the Derry elections in 1868 and proposed a resolution objecting to the proclamation of the city in December 1870. This meant that coercive measures could be imposed on the city to restrict the possibility of conflict. These measures restrained assemblage, the presence of guns (including cannons) and parades.

In December 1882 he said that Gladstone had set his mind on home rule and that, to Roman Catholics, Protestants would always be aliens on Irish soil. He suggested members should let their views on these political issues be known in no uncertain terms.⁹⁸ In August 1883 Rev. T. Fullerton (Newbliss) stated that Gladstone should be made to make a full account of any pact entered upon with Rome and the priests of Ireland, that it behoved Protestants to see that Protestants were returned for each borough and country in Ireland and that all Jesuits should be removed from the three kingdoms.⁹⁹ This political engagement increased later in the period studied.

In December 1885, Richard Babington (Anglican) gave a political speech on the correct form of political representation in parliament (specifically evangelical/Orange Protestant) and on Protestant unity. He asserted that the view expressed by the Liberal press was that home rule was inevitable; it was only the terms on which it would be granted that remained to be settled. He said that this

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.; LS 20 Dec. 1870, 19 Dec. 1882.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 14 Aug. 1883.

was not the case as many of the members returned to parliament were moderate constitutional Liberals not in favour of home rule. In these hands, he stated, they would be as safe as in those of the Conservative Party. He encouraged Irish loyalists to stand firm and show the government that they would not stand for home rule. He said the answer was unity and that the hand of fellowship should be offered to all Protestants and Roman Catholics who would stand and fight with them for liberty and justice and for the liberty of the country.¹⁰⁰

There was always some clerical representation at the meetings, their influence perhaps out of proportion to their numbers as they were often speakers. Guidance and authority from the pulpit carried over into the secular meeting and complemented lay input. In most years there were fewer than four members of clergy present (see Appendix 1). There was an increase in numbers in 1863 (6) reflecting the extra religious services associated with the revival years, in 1868 reflecting the concern about disestablishment (13), in 1873 due to the laying of the corner stone of the new headquarters, Memorial Hall, (6) and in 1883 owing to unease over the prospect of home rule (8). Disestablishment saw the greatest turn out. It is also worth noting that though there was always a mixed Anglican and Presbyterian representation much, but not all, of the leadership came from the Church of Ireland.

The clerical involvement was as much about showing solidarity as providing a lead. Those closely involved did give constant guidance but their views were shared by the membership and reinforced by the lay leadership. On the occasions when unwelcome guidance or influence stemmed from religious quarters, it was resisted. This was demonstrated when Bishop William Higgin attempted to stop

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 19 Dec. 1885.

the crimson flag being flown from the chancel and when advice was given by George Dougherty (Anglican minister) and William Gregg, lay leader, not to fire the guns in 1860 as the Party Emblems Act was going through parliament.¹⁰¹ In December 1860, Johnston congratulated the membership on their independence in this regard.¹⁰² This independence was regarded as opposite to the perceived behaviour of Roman Catholics who were reputedly led in all aspects of life by their priests. Evangelicals were expected to be individuals who made their own decisions and answered directly to God.

These were not the only examples of rejecting clerical advice. Members refused to give up their flags to retain the use of the First Presbyterian Church for the commemorative services.¹⁰³ And in December 1889, when there was a dispute between the Apprentice Boys and the cathedral concerning the choice of speaker, the clubs marched to Christ Church (the free Anglican Church, known as the evangelical Church) to hear their choice of speaker whilst the sermon in the cathedral was attended by only a few Apprentice Boys who did not wear insignia.¹⁰⁴

Richard Babington was one of the clergy whose advice was heeded. He was more greatly involved in the period around disestablishment and in the run up to the reading of the first home rule bill. He was, however, in accord with the membership. The clergy were respected in their religious role and could contribute in political and practical guidance as long as they led in what was perceived to be the right direction. Militant evangelicals tended to do so.

¹⁰¹ See Chapter 2, p. 131.

¹⁰² *LS*, 21 Dec. 1860.

¹⁰³ See Chapter 2, p.153.

¹⁰⁴ *LS*, 19 Dec. 1889.

Development of a Religio-Political Agenda

It is clear that politics played a vital part as the organisation developed in the period between 1860 and 1886 but it was religio-politics. The importance of the ideology of Dr. Henry Cooke, an early proponent of this concept, was evident in the speeches following his death in 1868.¹⁰⁵ The list of twenty reasons for being an Orangeman, written by Rev Thomas Drew in 1848 and attached as Appendix 2, mesh well with the themes highlighted in the sermons. Although Drew was likely to highlight the religious values, being a clergyman, these were shared by the lay membership and illustrated the position of evangelical Orangeism.¹⁰⁶ The appeal to the laity is signified by the distribution, in Birmingham in May 1866, of 1000 copies of Drew's 'Twenty Reasons for being an Orangeman' and the pamphlet 'What is the True Meaning of Orangeism'. These were printed by a local Lodge for distribution in order to increase membership.¹⁰⁷ Orange support of Drew, to the extent of having his image displayed on banners, was a result of his untiring airing of these views which they endorsed. These views were shared by Johnston and regularly aired at meetings. That the Apprentice Boys respected such views is indicated by their invitation to Drew to address them on his visit in December 1860 and their veneration of Johnston.¹⁰⁸ The list displays an effective combination of the values of evangelical Orangeism.

Overall, there is evidence of considerable change in the organisation between 1859 and 1886. This appears to reflect the growing influence of the Orange

¹⁰⁵ LS, 22 Dec. 1868.

¹⁰⁶ See Chapter 1, pp.42-3.

¹⁰⁷ Peach, 'Poverty, Religion and Prejudice', p.306.

¹⁰⁸ See Chapter 5, pp.316-7.

Order. While party processions tended to be a populist issue with the Orange hierarchy supporting the government rather than its populist members, this began to change from 1868. With the Fenian rising in 1867, a Gladstonian government threatening disestablishment of the Church of Ireland and major land reform underlining the need for Protestant unity, members of the Orange aristocracy and Anglican clergy began to mobilise. Some peers like Viscount Massarene hosted Orange demonstrations and the Earl of Erne combined the party processions issue with that of disestablishment.¹⁰⁹ In 1870 a magistrate noted that 'the Protestant clergymen are far more active than usual in keeping alive the Orange feeling, which seems to have gained strength since last year.'¹¹⁰ The more political direction evident in the Apprentice Boys' celebrations should be seen against a backdrop of increased Orange activity. On 12 July 1868, Orangemen across Ulster took to the streets and later in the month there were sizable loyalist demonstrations in Lisburn, Ballymacash, Ballymoney, Portadown, Tandragee, Annaghmore, Keady, Waringstown, Ballynahinch, Rathfriland, Randalstown, Newtonards, Bellaghy, Castledawson and Monaghan town.¹¹¹

There was considerable networking between local loyalist leaders to develop unity. Within Loyalism networking was aided by six monthly meetings of the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland, visits to Belfast and Dublin and, where MPs were concerned, London. Correspondence played a vital role. William Johnston kept in regular touch with John Guy Ferguson, Governor of the Apprentice Boys during difficult periods for Derry, especially in 1869.¹¹² As matters progressed towards Gladstone's commitment to Home Rule, the pattern became established.

¹⁰⁹ Farrell, 'Recapturing the Flag', p.68.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid., p.70.

¹¹² Diary, Jul - Aug. 1869, PRONI D880/2/21.

The change in direction for the organisation and its incorporation into a wider network is clearly represented by the early contributions of Johnston, the involvement of Richard Babington from 1868 and the resolutions adopted that same year. It suggests consolidation into a more inclusive and structured organisation. The earlier lack of solidarity was reflected by the incident in December 1860 when the majority agreed that the firing of the cannons should not constitute part of the anniversary ceremony.¹¹³ Unlike the later resolutions which did reflect solidarity, this decision was later challenged by other members and some firing did go ahead 'to test the legality of the situation'.¹¹⁴ (There were prosecutions but the verdict was in the Apprentice Boys' favour.) This substantiates the suggestion that there was a wider base of opinion in the organisation at this period. It was at the following commemorative event that William Johnston first attended the anniversary celebrations.

Johnston criticised the initial proposal to restrict firing.¹¹⁵ It was, he believed, a concession to error. He saw the bishop's hand in events and compared him to Bishop Hopkins, who before the siege advised accommodation.¹¹⁶ The anniversaries were primarily a local event at this point. However, Johnston said that he had been asked to thank the organisation for their stand on commemoration on behalf of the Protestants of Down and Canada. He told them that they had set an example by defying the ban. Concessions had been for too long the order of the day, he stated, and the Apprentice Boys had fought again the battle of 1688. His rhetoric was well received.¹¹⁷ From this point there was a

¹¹³ LS, 21 Dec. 1860.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 20 Dec. 1861.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 21 Dec. 1860.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

definite strengthening of resolve in the association and a reshuffling of membership to reflect the increasingly Conservative base.

At his various visits to the commemoration, Johnston voiced his message in increasingly clear terms. In December 1861, now a member, he stated that in the present times, wisdom was not the quality required but action. He encouraged the Apprentice Boys to stand firm and no government would stand against them. The inference was that God was on their side.¹¹⁸ In 1865, he said that though some (Liberals) might regard the Derry celebrations as local events, it was a beacon for God's truth as well as representing God's people. He emphasised that Derry had been saved as a lesson for all Protestants: it was an example of the struggle between God's truth and the Devil's lies. He said that Protestant truth must be guarded in church and state. Then he referred to another organisation that cherished the same principles as the Apprentice Boys, meaning the Orange Order, and pointed out that it was not so long ago that orange ribbons and flags had had a part in their commemorations. Johnston was encouraging Conservative Protestant unity across Ulster.¹¹⁹

In 1862, there was still a wider base of membership. John Hempton, taking the chair at the soiree, said, 'we meet here not as political partisans of either of the great Liberal or Conservative parties, nor of any ... section of either of them'.¹²⁰ The suggestion was that representatives of both were present. Mr. Fitzgibbon Louche, a Deputy Grand Master of the Orange Order at the period, told the inquiry into the 1869 riots that, though he himself was a 'party' man, the Apprentice Boys

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 20 Dec. 1861.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 19 Dec. 1865.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 19 Dec. 1862.

were not.¹²¹ However, evangelical Orangeism was not 'party' related. The group were still holding a wider evangelical base in 1864 but in 1865 Hempton was reportedly pushed out after voting Liberal at the 1865 election.¹²² There was obviously less accommodation and a narrowing of views at this juncture. This was due to the new guiding influences in Ferguson and Johnston prepared to turn the organisation into a useful religio-political vehicle.

This parting of ways was likely to have been a two-way process as the Liberal Presbyterians were becoming more partisan also. The *Londonderry Sentinel* put the Apprentice Boys' stand against interference in context in 1866 when it stated that "'No surrender" should be made a living principle of action by perseverance in everything that is good and stern resistance to all that is evil'.¹²³ The evangelical principle of not compromising when it came to doing what was right was becoming inter-related with that of the loyalist organisation, by its expression in siege terminology. In August 1867, the *Londonderry Standard* expressed its view of the dispute (1864) between the First Presbyterian Church and the Apprentice Boys regularly referred to by the *Sentinel*. It suggested that the Apprentice Boys had been trying to ride roughshod over the committee, that the reference to 'other' Presbyterian churches housing their flags referred to only one church on one occasion and that the Conservative Presbyterians active in the organisation were not regular church-goers.¹²⁴ These sections of the Protestant community were drawing apart while others were drawing together.

In August 1868, there was a change in format and formal resolutions were read in the meetings following the church service. It was at this meeting that Johnston

¹²¹ *Inquiry, Londonderry*, min. 5853.

¹²² *Ibid*, min. 818; See Chapter 3, p.193.

¹²³ *LS*, 14 Aug. 1866.

¹²⁴ *Londonderry Standard*, 10 Aug. 1867; *LS*, 13 Aug. 1867.

said that the Apprentice Boys and Orangemen were united in sympathy and as part of the same great cause.¹²⁵ Reading resolutions did not occur in every year. Some periods, for example 1874 and 1875, were relatively quiet and the customary form of giving thanks to the preacher and making presentations to long serving members were the order of the day. Similarly in 1873 when the corner stone of the Memorial Hall was laid, pledges were made to raise funds for the building work.¹²⁶ This was also the case in 1874.¹²⁷ However, these were internal matters. Others were not routine but apolitical. In 1878, for example, a resolution of condolence was sent to Queen Victoria on the death of Princess Alice.¹²⁸ In other years, the organisation took a more assertive stance and formal resolutions were read reflecting the perception of greater danger, the years when numbers were at their highest, and it is these that are highlighted in the following account.

In August 1868, Johnston read the first resolution.¹²⁹ Resolutions identified important issues that needed public consensus and were intended for publication. The resolutions passed at the August 1868 meetings were important because the membership were stating, for the record, who they were and what they had become.

That we the descendents of the heroic defenders of Derry, who at the Glorious Revolution of 1688, fought valiantly and successfully on and before our sacred walls in the interest of a Constitutional King and in maintenance of the Protestant religion and liberties of Ireland: now that same religion and liberties are assailed when not only the Irish Church but the English and Scottish Churches and Protestant institutions of the Empire are virtually threatened, when the principles upon which the throne of our Beloved Queen is based are menaced, do hereby pledge ourselves to maintain with all our strength and influence and resolution, the religion, liberties, principles and institutions for which our brave fathers fought and triumphed, as upon this day, nothing doubting that the same Providence,

¹²⁵ LS, 14 Aug. 1868.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 14 Aug. 1873.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 13 Aug. 1874.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 19 Dec. 1878.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 14 Aug. 1868.

who gave them victory and relief, will again defeat all hostile machinations and render triumphant the cause of truth and freedom.¹³⁰

The Orange principles of protection of Protestantism and the Constitution were combined with the local narrative of divine deliverance from siege.

The second resolution was read by Rev. Richard Babington:

That regarding the Bible as the only sure basis of the Christian religion, and the only true guide of Church and State, and considering that Protestants of differing denominations derive their instruction from its pure sources; remembering also with delight that at the ever memorable defence of Derry, Churchmen and Presbyterians, brothers in suffering and endurance and brothers also in a glorious victory, worshipped together in the same venerable Cathedral, in which today we returned thanks to Almighty God for the great relief, we their descendants, a united Protestant phalanx on this day of immortal memories, hereby express our continual and fervent attachment to Protestant Union, feeling convinced that with the divine blessing, it will prove, as of old, a tower of strength mightily to resist the numerous evil combinations of a degenerate and unprincipled age.¹³¹

The biblicism and Protestant unity are set here in an evangelical context and combined with the local narrative.

In these two resolutions Loyalist and evangelical principles are entwined and inter-related. Babington further combined religious and secular issues by giving a speech on the merits of political and spiritual Union versus disunion. A decade later, in December 1877, Robert Donnell was to confirm that Episcopalians and Presbyterians could not be divided despite their enemies' exertions as they were bound together in the Apprentice Boys and the Orange Order with joint principles.¹³²

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid., 20 Dec. 1877.

Religious conviction and covenantal justification, rather than popular sectarianism, was to the fore in 1869, when the city was proclaimed and there was a threat of violence from the Roman Catholic community. Johnston said that he had come to Derry determined not to be prevented from commemorating the anniversary in customary fashion and had been prepared to lay down his life. He praised the resolution of his fellow members in the Apprentice Boys organisation in following through in their decision to defy the proclamation.¹³³ He did, however, make it clear that he did not want violence stating that he did not want anyone to use a gun either to protect or to avenge his life. In 1871, he refused to submit to 'a tyrannous and unconstitutional proclamation'. He led the march to church wearing his sash, refused to remove it when challenged by police and ran the gauntlet of protestors from the Roman Catholic community and charges by mounted police.¹³⁴ In 1872, a resolution was read recognising Johnston's role in having the Party Processions Act (1850) removed.¹³⁵ In 1873, members were assured that the deeds and names of the original apprentice boys were in the heart of every Protestant in Ulster, Ireland and world-wide. Nothing, they were told, would separate those joined in common bond be they Protestant, Presbyterian, Wesleyan, Independent or others.¹³⁶ In 1876, members from the Triennial Council of the Orange Order were welcomed to the anniversary.¹³⁷ They proclaimed their solidarity. In a drive towards Protestant unity, Loyalism, Orangeism and evangelicalism were becoming hybridised.

In August 1877, at the opening of Memorial Hall, William Johnston read the 46th psalm as a prelude to the resolution he was proposing. He asked that the

¹³³ Ibid., 21 Dec. 1869.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 15 Aug. 1871.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 13 Aug. 1872.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 14 Aug. 1873.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 15 Aug. 1876.

assembly have God's words written on their hearts, as the sermon had suggested, as they upheld and maintained the Orange and Protestant cause. The resolution was to pledge anew to those religious and civil liberties for which the thirteen apprentice boys struck the first blow in 1688. In this resolution, the agenda of the Orange Order was publicly declared as an aspect of the organisation. Johnston, in his delivery of the resolution and regular reference to the psalm 'God is our refuge' was following the format of an evangelical sermon.¹³⁸

From this point, the transition towards Unionism was discernible. In December 1879, John Guy Ferguson introduced a resolution by stating that normally political remarks were not made at the commemorations, but in view of sedition (attempts to revoke the Union) this tradition must be overruled. He said that when communism was proclaimed and those with land were ignored, it was their duty 'to resolve fealty to liberty' for all, to support the throne and Constitution and to stand fast in old paths. He emphasised that the Apprentice Boys were conservative but Protestants first – they were conservative in that they held the principles of old. Robert Donnell proposed the next resolution which was to stand fast in the old paths and maintain the rights of fellow subjects now menaced by seditious and misguided men. Donnell then referred to the disappointing electoral defeat of the Conservative candidate in Donegal. Believing strongly in the divine order, he then commented that having Liberals as landlords was not a good thing; men who 'traffic in land like butter and eggs' could not support the interests of their tenants. Pointing out that Presbyterians should not share a platform with those subverting the Constitution, he added that Gladstone was prepared to 'coquette with sedition' to bring himself into power.¹³⁹

¹³⁸ Ibid., 14 Aug. 1877.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 20 Dec. 1879.

Issues of loyalty and patriotism, laced with evangelical conviction were encouraging a much harder line in the Apprentice Boys' organisation. Though it had emerged as a power group in the late sixties it had, until this point, avoided overt political issues. Donnell stated in December 1877, that the Apprentice Boys were not only a religious body but a political one and it had duties outside commemoration.¹⁴⁰ The battle now continued in the political as well as religious sphere but the distinction still remained that, no matter what might be 'the bigger picture' for Conservatives, the traditional Protestant principles of the organisation were to be maintained without compromise.

During the seventies there was much manoeuvring in the background. Johnston had corresponded widely with influential peers such as Lords Enniskillen and Abercorn; there were regular meetings as a direct result of such networking. Johnston's diary for 1880 stated that on 17 December he attended the meeting of the Ulster Constitutional Union Committee to arrange the rules, where the Duke of Abercorn was voted President and the Ulster Conservative Peers, MPs and county Grand Masters of the Orange Lodge became vice presidents. Its function was to 'act as a central body for the conservatives in Ulster.'¹⁴¹ A lot of work had obviously been done during the late seventies to bring this about.

Religious justification from the pulpit reinforced the desire for action and bolstered the rhetoric in the speeches. In December 1880, Richard Babington criticised the short-comings of the Liberal government which had sacrificed the Church of Ireland to appease the disloyal. What it really had in mind, he argued, was the

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 20 Dec. 1877.

¹⁴¹ B. Walker, *Ulster Politics*, p.156.

extirpation of the landlord class and the end of the Union.¹⁴² The following year, William Alexander stated that though it was wrong to attempt to tie the church to a political party, the historical deliverance celebrated in Derry was not party political. He added that they had a right to their anger at what was being done by the government and a 'free civilized community should not cease when foes are lined against it'. He warned that the power aimed at the heart of the Reformation in 1688 (Roman Catholicism) was advancing again and pushing them toward a 'fatal republic'.¹⁴³ The religio-political stance was endorsed.

In August 1882, the resolution was that:

the Apprentice Boys of Derry and Orangemen of Ireland were ready and willing to keep the British Crown and Constitution inviolate, not according to the dictates of a Radical throng or of a Liberal or time-serving Conservative government but those of the throne and Constitution as established under William III of glorious memory.¹⁴⁴

In a speech in December of that year, Rev. Richard Babington warned of a power that had taken over the continent and much of Ireland. He said that it aimed at breaking all laws, human and divine, all relations social and family, all liberty of thought or action. He said that even Rome in its heyday of persecution was merciful in comparison. He warned that this 'nihilism' or communism of the continent demanded the dismemberment of the British Empire. Nihilism, he believed, would be a consequence of home rule as the Roman Catholic Church would increase its hold in Ireland and there would be a backlash as in European countries like France and Spain. He also warned that Gladstone was willing to experiment with home rule and said that Ulstermen should let it be known far and

¹⁴² *LS*, 21 Dec. 1880.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 20 Dec. 1881.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 15 Aug. 1882.

wide 'that this yoke they will not bear', and they should not worry about delicacy when resisting it.¹⁴⁵

In August 1883, Rev. Thomas Fullerton read the resolution

we resolutely protest against the rights and liberties ...achieved by heroes and true patriots being filched from the loyal and law abiding in the ignoble attempt to patch up a hollow treaty with the worst foes of Ireland, rebels and unprincipled agitators.¹⁴⁶

He added that the Papist party in Ireland had 'received many concessions from a time-serving government' and the time had come to say 'in the name of a covenant keeping God, hitherto thou shalt come and no further'. He added that something had to be done by the united Protestants of Ulster, Churchmen, Presbyterians and Methodists and warned that the day seemed to be coming when the crimson banner would have to be unfurled to the tune of 'no surrender'. He believed that Gladstone should be made to give account of his dealings with the Papacy and that Protestants should not rest till MPs were returned who were Protestants before any other consideration. He emphasised that the Jesuits should be removed from every part of 'the three kingdoms'. He added that the Queen's claim to the throne was dependent on her upholding Protestantism, as Charles I allegedly failed to do.¹⁴⁷

Rev. R. R. Kane proposed the second resolution

That we pledge ourselves to oppose in every Constitutional way the disunity or dismemberment of the Empire and call on all MPs to speak with one voice against the same.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 19 Dec. 1882.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 14 Aug. 1883.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 20 Dec. 1883.

Kane said that the best and only way this might be accomplished was 'to put your trust in God and keep your powder dry'. He did not specify exactly what this meant in practice but the language was more forceful than usual, even though the language of political opposition was increasing.

In December 1883, Rev. Richard Babington read the resolution

that we cannot permit the occasion to pass without expressing our indignation at the insult offered to the loyalists of Ireland by the removal of Lord Rossmore from the commission of the peace, together with the proclamation of the time honoured celebration of the 'shutting of the gates'.

The 5th Lord Rossmore was a celebrated Orangeman who staged an anti-Parnellite demonstration at Rosslea on the borders of Fermanagh and Monaghan and as a result, was dismissed from the Co. Monaghan magistracy. At this stage the organisation was moving from generalities to engagement with specific political issues. There followed a speech opposing Radicalism.¹⁴⁹

In December 1883, Lord Claud Hamilton presented the resolution which affirmed the commitment of the Apprentice Boys to hold the commemorative events and to support the Constitution. Emphasis was placed on the commemoration being not only local but an event which had implications for the Empire. In his subsequent speech, he stated that they were happy to live with Roman Catholics providing they were loyal. The issues of loyalty and disloyalty, patriotism and sedition were becoming more prominent, reinforcing the already established religio-political lines. He stated how a new Protestant and Orange party would be a means of uniting Ulster. At this period of crisis, Lord Claud was making a point of showing solidarity with the organisation.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

In August 1884, W. F. Black (ex governor of the Apprentice Boys of Dublin) proposed the resolution pledging to maintain what was left of the Constitution and Bill of Rights which the great victory in Ireland in 1689 helped establish. He said that though far less existed now of the Constitution of 1688, their ancestors had fought for it.¹⁵¹ Of particular concern at this juncture was the 1884 extension of the franchise which would give the vote to every householder. Mr. McCorkell, a visiting barrister who had been recently defeated in the election in Donegal, proposed the next resolution supporting the Marquis of Salisbury and the Constitutional party. He emphasised the fact that they were not opposed to the extension of the franchise but the manner in which it was being imposed. Gladstone wanted to 'rearrange the seats in such a way that Conservative government would be impossible for years'.¹⁵²

In December of that year, Lord Claud again pledged allegiance to the principles of 1688 and protested against the 'obliteration of the rights of the loyal minority in Ireland'. He said that much of what Conservatives had contended for the previous year had passed into the hands of the Nationalists; the Prime Minister had passed the Reform and Redistribution Bill and handed the country over to the nationalists. Protestants, he said, 'stand today the defeated Party in Ireland'.¹⁵³

In 1885, Rev. J. O'Connor (from Wicklow) stated that he was not overly pleased to see the Conservatives in power. Ministers attending from a distance were relatively common in this later period, highlighting the wider political significance of Derry, though the majority were from the northern counties. He emphasised what

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid., 14 Aug. 1884.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 20 Dec. 1884

was needed was men who put their religion before party politics. William Johnston added that they should be Orangemen if possible. He himself was to be back in parliament that November after seven years' absence. What was necessary, he emphasised, was that they were Protestants first.¹⁵⁴ Later that year the formal resolution was that the Union was necessary for prosperity, liberty and the maintenance of the Protestant religion.¹⁵⁵

The nature of the bicentennial dinner in December 1888 registered the depth of the changes wrought over the period. It was inclusive in that Liberal Presbyterians were in attendance but less so than the event a century previously where the Roman Catholic clergy attended.¹⁵⁶ At that earlier event, the patriotism reflected was Irish while retaining a special relationship with Britain. In the late nineteenth-century, inclusive meant Liberal and Conservative Protestantism, after a quarter of a century of political disagreement but now at one in wishing to retain union with Britain. The tone was set by the speech of Bishop William Alexander who spoke of the critical position of all loyal citizens in Ireland, no matter what their religious and political persuasion. Roman Catholics who were perceived to be right-thinking, loyal and industrious, were included in this. Hamilton had made this point in 1883 and Babington in 1885. Pragmatism in the face of the danger to the union was overcoming the customary desire to hold all Catholics at a distance, being courteous and charitable but nonetheless keeping them at arms length.

Alexander referred to the current political system in Britain which gave power to the numerical majority, every consideration but geography being 'cashiered' and minorities left without representation. He referred to the majority of Irish

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 19 Dec. 1885.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 13 Aug. 1885.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 20 Dec. 1888.

Presbyterians who were Liberal, but were Liberals of the stamp of Sir Sydney Smith, Lord John Russell or John Bright rather than William Gladstone. He believed they would not have countenanced home rule. He complimented the Moderator, Rev. R. J. Lynd, on his recent speech setting out the Presbyterian position, wishing he could have joined the company that evening. He stated that, in fairness, the half million Roman Catholics who opposed home rule should not be forgotten. In his view, the aim was to achieve the greatest union of loyal men. He emphasised that Churchmen and Presbyterians were joined, not only by common blood and ancestry, but by their common spirit of obedience to law and the spirit of freedom. Their third shared characteristic, he added, was the spirit of commerce, industrialisation and agricultural improvement. He outlined the perceived dangers to all if home rule went ahead. Unity, he urged, would help their survival.¹⁵⁷

In this later period, the emphasis changed from focussing on Liberalism as the greatest danger to opposing home rule in Ireland. The latter threatened the dissolving of the Union, and losing the Constitution. Further, it might lead to communism which was seen by the leadership as even a more dire threat than the papacy. Dissatisfaction with political parties in London whose values were increasingly at odds with Protestants in Ulster was evident. A Protestant unity that incorporated Liberal and Conservative evangelical Protestant ideology was to develop in Unionism.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

Cultural Identity

It has been argued by Alvin Jackson that, although perceptions of an Ulster identity did exist in the early 1880s, the full political, literary and general development of this related to the subsequent home rule debate and the desire for a specific identity, particularly in response to the third Home Rule Bill of 1912. Individual evangelical preachers, he stated, were active agents of Edwardian Unionism and mid-Victorian populist Toryism, and did contribute to party viability and the general development of this identity 'without being the tools of leadership'.¹⁵⁸

This conclusion appears to underestimate the importance of evangelicalism in this period. This was not confined to the contribution of a few high profile preachers. Their speeches were as much a reflection of the mood of the laity as instigators of opinion. Their evangelicalism was an aspect of Loyalism generally and the religio-political mindset was seen in both clergy and laity. At this time, evangelicalism, Loyalism and Orangeism were becoming fused in common purpose.

In the Apprentice Boys' association, clerical influence was evident from the constant clerical input at meetings and soirees and even, on occasions, from the pulpit. Richard Babington's influence was particularly evident in the period of disestablishment and in the 1880s in the run up to the first reading of the Home Rule Bill. The Apprentice Boys sought out evangelical clergy who would expound on the type of views they valued at their commemorative events. For them the importance of the role of the political preacher stemmed from the heroic figure of

¹⁵⁸ A. Jackson, *The Ulster Party; Irish Unionists in the House of Commons, 1884-1911* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), pp.15, 18.

Rev. John Walker, dominant during the siege and Rev. James Gordon, Presbyterian Minister of Glendermott who supported the original apprentice boys in their decision to close the gates. They were regarded as men brought forth by God in difficult times. In the prelude to Catholic Emancipation, Walker became the icon that represented Protestant defiance in the face of the re-emerging enemy, an enemy whose numbers could only alarm them. A statue of the warrior priest was commissioned by the Apprentice Boys in 1825 and erected within the city walls towering above the Bogside (the Catholic quarter). Walker pointed towards the River Foyle and held in his right hand an open bible with Exodus 20 inscribed on the page.¹⁵⁹ This was a composite image of Protestant commitment and power, and of a 'chosen people'.

The so called 'fiery preachers' who were involved with the Apprentice Boys' organisation were Cooke, Drew, Hanna and Kane. Cooke was a Dublin Apprentice Boy and gave the anniversary sermon in Derry in 1862 and his ideas were fundamental to the Loyalist organisations. Drew and Hanna attended the anniversary celebrations in the sixties and Kane in the eighties, Hanna and Kane ('the politico-spiritual director of late nineteenth-century Belfast Unionism')¹⁶⁰ were initiated into the Derry organisation.¹⁶¹ The religious-political ideology that developed between the 1860s and 1880s held a mixture of Orange and evangelical values. Though these preachers had high profiles throughout Ulster, analyses of the speeches suggest that the ideas they held were not novel.

¹⁵⁹ Thomas Macaulay, B., *The History of England: from the accession of James II* (Longman, Brown, 1858), III pp. 537-41.

¹⁶⁰ Jackson, *Ulster Party*, p.18.

¹⁶¹ Hanna initiated in August 1863 and Kane in August 1881.

Similar views were transmitted on regular occasions by the majority of the anniversary preachers. What Hanna and Kane encapsulated in their rhetoric, in an effective form, were ideas and values that were already becoming accepted. What raised them in stature were not only their eloquent and charismatic speeches but the fact that they were willing to stand up for Protestantism, actively supporting their religion in the face of all opposition. What made them important to incipient Unionism, was their interweaving of what could reasonably be regarded as Orange and evangelical values to provide a strong cultural identity.

Conclusion

By 1885, the synthesis of the ideologies of Orangeism, Loyalism, covenantalism and evangelicalism within Conservative Protestantism had formed a strong component that would transfer to Unionism. The catalyst encouraging the merging of these elements into a strong and inflexible hybrid was the combination of the unprecedented issues of the period, with conservative religious beliefs under threat from modern theories, religious institutions challenged by political manoeuvring and Protestant hegemony by the rise of Irish nationalism. The home rule debates might not have taken place but the implications were there for all to see.

By this stage, the Apprentice Boys' association had been transformed from a local civic organisation to one displaying a greater sense of corporate identity, sharing political agendas and demonstrating co-operation with other loyalist groups. The uniting of religious and political convictions and agendas was clearly illustrated by the religio-political discourse. The evangelical attribute of activism was combined with the political agenda of Orangeism and, in the process, the attribute of

conversionism, because of the imperative to hold ground, was transformed into a type of protectionism to maintain the values and gains of Protestantism on all levels. The resulting hybrid became imbued with evangelical enthusiasm. Further, evangelicalism enabled the coming together of the loyalist organisations facilitating Protestant unity and providing common purpose. These separate organisations became linked together in a chain of cultural identity. Exploration of this theme is continued in the discussion of the ritual development in Chapter Five.

Appendix 1

Clerical attendance at meetings/social events

In the figure below, numbers reflect information provided from 1862 onwards.

Previously the accounts were less comprehensive

Date	No. of clergy	Date	No. of clergy
12.08.1862	Not listed	18.12.1862	1
12.08.1863	5	18.12.1863	6
12.08.1864	Not listed	18.12.1864	3
12.08.1865	Not listed	18.12.1865	1
12.08.1866	Not listed	18.12.1866	1
12.08.1867	3	18.12.1867	2
12.08.1868	13	18.12.1868	3
12.08.1869	Not listed	18.12.1869	Not listed
12.08.1870	Not listed	18.12.1870	1
12.08.1871	Not listed	18.12.1871	Not listed
12.08.1872	2	18.12.1872	1
12.08.1873	6	18.12.1873	1
12.08.1874	1	18.12.1874	3
12.08.1875	1	18.12.1875	1
12.08.1876	1	18.12.1876	1
12.08.1877	4	18.12.1877	1
12.08.1878	1	18.12.1878	1
12.08.1879	3	18.12.1879	1
12.08.1880	Not listed	18.12.1880	4
12.08.1881	3	18.12.1881	1
12.08.1882	1	18.12.1882	2
12.08.1883	8	18.12.1883	3
12.08.1884	4	18.12.1884	4
12.08.1885	4	18.12.1885	4
12.08.1886	1	18.12.1886	1

Appendix 2

'Twenty Reasons for Being an Orangeman' by Rev. Thomas Drew. First published in 1848 by Orange Institution.

1. Because I desire to live to the glory of God and resisting error, superstition and idolatry earnestly to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints;
2. Because I desire to combine with my Protestant brethren for the sake of mutual testimony, protection and love;
3. Because connection with the Orange body draws much attention to the history of past deliverances and across them to vigilance, energy and witnesship for God;
4. Because I desire to remember the mercies of God bestowed at the Reformation and also at the Glorious Revolution under William III;
5. Because an Orangeman is bound to show forth by his life his desire of man's salvation, his obedience to the dictates of Protestantism and his efforts to deliver Romanists from mental perversion and spiritual slavery;
6. Because the members of the Orange Institution have always been enabled by the grace of God to exhibit loyalty, patience, firmness and brotherly love;
7. Because Orangemen honour the Holy Bible at all their meetings; conduct their proceedings by its Heavenly precepts and frame for Orange Ritual chiefly from its sublime prophecy;
8. Because the empire has always flourished when Protestant leaders guided the helm of state by the light of God's revealed will, and when Protestant truths were in the supremacy;
9. Because I learn by the doctrines, history and daily practices of the Church of Rome that the lives of Protestants are endangered, the laws of England set at nought, and the crown of England subordinated to the dictation of an Italian bishop;
10. Because the Papacy has never repented and cannot repent of its continental massacres of Protestants of its demonic Inquisition and Irish rebellion of 1641 and 1798;
11. Because Popery annually breathes denunciations (from) Rome by a well known 'Bull' against the existence of Heretics (Protestants);
12. Because the Church of Rome teaches in her schools that heresy is not to be endured, nor heretics be permitted to live;
13. Because Popery is not content with equality, and because it claims the unconstitutional privileges of a double allegiance (to the Pope and Queen) also of a right for her priests to withhold treasonable and felonious communications; and for the Pope to be the arbiter of the lives, laws and liberties of mankind;
14. Because notwithstanding the private worth of many members of the Roman Church that generally Roman Catholic jurymen refuse to give a true verdict according to evidence when the cause of their church of party is presumed to be at stake;
15. Because Popery maintains a continued rancour against the Protestant people of Great Britain receiving their charities with ingratitude and stimulating its followers to detest the 'Saxon' and to loath the rule and realm in England;

16. Because Jesuits are openly tolerated in Great Britain and Ireland contrary to express laws of the empire;
17. Because all truckling to Popery has, in every instance, been attended with renewed clamour for further concessions; in violation of pledges given by Roman Catholics;
18. Because it cannot be otherwise but that under the downward progress of British legislation, God will be made angry and the nation imperilled; Protestant union and testimony are, therefore, required to deprecate God's indignation and to 'bide the time' of needful resistance;
19. Because many who were once Romanists have been led by the rigour and fidelity of Protestant testimony, to contrast it with their unholy bondage system, and to forsake it by God's blessing for ever;
20. Because the whole history of the Bible assures us that if we be prayerful, united and zealous for God, the Time, the Man, and Deliverance will come.

CHAPTER FIVE

Ritual: The Invention of Tradition and Civil Religion

This chapter continues the theme of a chain of cultural identity developing in the period 1860-1885. While chapter four focussed on discourse, this one explores the ritual of the Apprentice Boys' commemorations in Londonderry providing complementary evidence. The first section considers the centrality of the myth of the siege of Londonderry which the ritual commemorates and considers the concept of 'invention of tradition' and its applicability to the Apprentice Boys' ritual. The second considers the commemorations before 1860, exploring the development of ritual from its emergence from the folk tradition of early Orangeism, to provide a basis of comparison with the later period. The third considers the development from 1860-1885 in an effort to determine whether this period was pivotal. The final section considers the rituals in relation to the concept of 'civil religion'.

The Siege Myth and the Invention of Tradition

Rituals are 'formalised, stylised and repetitive symbolic activities' which have a specific format and are focussed on particular times and places. The continuity of form conceals changes in meaning so that they are both 'unchanging and yet ever changeable'.¹ The rituals of the Apprentice Boys' anniversary commemorations were centred on the myth of the siege of Londonderry of 1688-9. This was a historic parable that allowed for subtle reinterpretation to meet contemporary

¹ N. Jarman, *Material Conflicts*, pp. 8-10.

requirements. The historical account became myth where perceived flaws and inconvenient details were airbrushed from the resulting picture leaving a malleable image that was perfect for the purpose of political representation, its value ascribed to its relevance to contemporary situations. Thus it could be used to highlight constitutional benefits in the later half of the eighteenth-century, a more strongly evangelical and sectarian dimension in the mid nineteenth-century, and act as a central symbol in Unionist rhetoric in the run up to home rule.

Ian McBride states that a circle of myths concerning the struggles between seventeenth-century Protestant settler and Catholic native communities, lay at the centre of Ulster Protestant culture, with the siege of Londonderry in the key position.² Anthony Buckley sees the siege as the most important historical event in Loyalist history.³ A.T.Q. Stewart suggests this was because the siege represents a paradigm for the siege of the entire plantation and highlighted the courageous resistance of the Protestant settlers.⁴ And for Tony Gray, the siege itself represented the beginning of Orangeism in Ireland.⁵ Mark McGovern states that Unionism found its most 'clear mythical expression in the late nineteenth century vision of the Londonderry Siege'.⁶ Thus there is general agreement that the myth of the siege was of major significance to Ulster Protestant culture, not merely a local affair. It featured in the commemorations of other Loyalist orders, such as the Orange Order and the Black Preceptory, as part of the wider mythology. But in the Derry commemorations, this myth of the siege was exclusively perpetuated.

² I. McBride, *The Siege of Derry*, p.9-10.

³ A. Buckley, *Negotiating Identity*, p.46.

⁴ A.T.Q. Stewart, *The Narrow Ground*, p.52.

⁵ Tony Gray, *The Orange Order* (London: The Bodley Head, 1972), p.36.

⁶ M. McGovern, 'The siege myth' p.276.

The basic themes of the story were 'defiance, solidarity, sacrifice, and deliverance'.⁷ The story of the siege, in outline, began with thirteen apprentices closing the gates of the city of Londonderry on 18 December 1688 (new style calendar post 1752) against the Catholic army of the Earl of Antrim. (Controlling the city was important to the plans of James II in his attempt to regain the throne of the three kingdoms of England, Scotland and Ireland from William of Orange so there was to be a concerted effort to take the city from the perceived rebels.) McBride considered this 'call for popular mobilisation and resolute action' as the first component in the myth.⁸ Defensive action was reinterpreted later as a political statement, against the rule of a Catholic monarch, on the part of the thirteen.

The second component of the myth advocated dealing decisively with 'doubters, appeasers and traitors'. The advice of the bishop of Londonderry, Ezekiel Hopkins, who could not reconcile disobedience to King James with his conscience, was disregarded. The military governor, Lieutenant-Colonel Robert Lundy resigned under pressure and was labelled a traitor. In his place, Adam Murray, Major Henry Baker and the Rev. George Walker became military and civil governors. Ultimate success was ascribed to this decisive action.

In April 1689, negotiations with the Jacobites finally broke down and the siege began in earnest. Those in the city suffered bombardment, disease and famine resulting in approximately 10,000 deaths, as people sheltered in the city from the surrounding countryside.⁹ On 13th June 1689, a relief expedition reached the River Foyle but it was not until six weeks later that *The Mountjoy* broke through the boom over the river and reached the city. This timely rescue was interpreted in

⁷ McBride, *Siege of Derry*, p.12.

⁸ Ibid., p.16.

⁹ Ibid., p.18.

mythology as sacrifice for religious beliefs being rewarded by heavenly deliverance.

The third element of the story dealt with the lack of consideration and absence of reparation made by the English – the wages of the garrison, for example, were never paid and no compensation was offered for property damaged in spite of the case being examined on two occasions by the House of Commons.¹⁰ England was greatly indebted to the sacrifice of the people of Londonderry, the victory at Derry perceived as being of cardinal importance to the campaign in Ireland and thus to the outcome of the Glorious Revolution, but the debt was left unpaid. Oliver MacDonagh describes the myth as the classic embodiment of the bleak vision of the past as 'an endless repetition of repelled assaults without hope of absolute finality or of fundamental change'.¹¹ But in the mid nineteenth century, evangelicalism gave a vital confidence that if God's expectations of Protestants were fulfilled, then the outcome would be victorious. This produced a renewed and determined drive to action.

Evangelicalism had asserted itself in Ireland from the late eighteenth century. By the early nineteenth century, it was imbuing the Ulster Protestant community with a sense of divine approval in its opposition to Roman Catholicism.¹² At the beginning of the relevant period, 1859-85, when the influence of evangelicalism on the clergy, the lay leadership of the clubs and the membership was particularly significant in the wake of the Revival of 1859, the emphasis was on God's deliverance and the mood was still confident and upbeat. Evangelicals interpreted the myth as encouragement to those who regarded themselves as the

¹⁰ Ibid., pp.15-20.

¹¹ O. MacDonagh, *States of Mind: A Study of Anglo-Irish Conflict 1780-1980* (London: 1983), p.14.

¹² D. Hempton and M. Hill, *Evangelical Protestantism in Ulster*, p.44.

descendants of God's chosen people to anticipate His help in difficult times as long as they held true to their covenant.¹³ This evangelical interpretation of the myth had much to do with the catalytic influence of William Johnston as well as other lay and clerical evangelicals.¹⁴ The evangelical rhetoric of the leadership justified the actions of the members and gave respectability to their followers whose actions might previously been regarded as plebeian sectarianism.

From this period, the display of symbols became more significant. Sean Connolly relates the desire for the display of symbols of identity in public spaces in Belfast at this point in time to increasing sectarian and political polarisation.¹⁵ He argues that the emergence of the space itself politicised what had previously been purely plebeian animosity. With issues of nationalism overlaying religious and ethnic identity, the urge to fill the space with symbols denoting ownership of that space became prevalent. In Londonderry, ritual symbols burgeoned from the 1860s in an attempt to stamp ownership on the walled centre with its connection to the Protestant myth of deliverance and because of its identity as the 'Maiden City' which had never been breached by Roman Catholic forces.¹⁶ As in Belfast, the increased assertiveness resulted in a union of 'plebeian and bourgeois' collective action¹⁷ as Apprentice Boys and their supporters upheld tradition. Though maintenance of tradition was their aim, something new was emerging.

The term 'invented tradition' is defined by Eric Hobsbawm as an inclusive description of 'traditions' actually 'invented, constructed and formally instituted' and those which emerged in a less traceable manner within a relatively short space of

¹³ See Chapter 3, p. 202.

¹⁴ See Chapter, 4, pp.235-6.

¹⁵ S. Connolly, ESRC Research Report: Imaging Belfast: Politics, ritual, Symbols and Crowds (Swindon, 2008), p.4

¹⁶ M. McGovern, 'We have a strong city', p.16.

¹⁷ Connolly, 'Imaging Belfast', p.10.

time. He highlights the period between 1870 and 1914 as one that saw such a process within Great Britain and the colonies and throughout Europe, especially in regard to parades and mass gatherings. However, Hobsbawm adds that there is possibly no time or place which has not seen such 'invention of tradition' but that it could be expected to occur most frequently when there was rapid social transformation, such as from agrarian to industrial society. The symbolic practices of invented tradition inculcated 'certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implied continuity with the past'.¹⁸ This continuity was, however, fictitious and the 'traditions' were a response to new situations, often resulting from the 'weakening or destroying' of the social patterns for which the old traditions were designed.¹⁹

New traditions did not need to be 'revived or invented' when old traditions were already well established and active. However, a crucial factor here was the difference between 'tradition' and custom. Traditions were invariant and repetitious; customs were more flexible and could evolve, albeit within strict parameters. Hobsbawm's useful example for discerning between custom and tradition is the role of a judge. What the judge does is custom; the invented tradition is the wig, robe and other formal paraphernalia and ritualised practices that surround his actions.²⁰ But, there was an inter-relationship, sometimes continuity, between custom and tradition and therein lies an area of dispute when analysing commemorative marches in Ulster.

That a custom of commemoration existed from the early eighteenth-century is not in doubt and opinions vary as to whether these later manifestations were the result

¹⁸ E. J. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: 1993), p.1.

¹⁹ Ibid, pp.2-4.

²⁰ Ibid, p.3.

of a gradual evolution in practice or might reasonably be regarded as an 'invention of tradition'. Brian Walker, in his essay on Unionist history, clearly regards the Williamite commemorations as having been virtually forgotten in the eighteenth century, only becoming of importance in the late nineteenth century in common with similar constructions in other European cities.²¹ However, in his chapter on the rise of popular religious and political traditions in Londonderry, he states that the Apprentice Boys' commemorations only achieved significant levels of popular participation post 1921 'in spite of general social, political and economic change' that, according to Hobsbawm, should trigger the phenomenon much sooner.²² An argument can reasonably be made, however, that the trigger was discernible in the early 1860s when a combination of rising Irish nationalism, dissatisfaction with the Conservatism of Lord Derby and the fear of the new Liberalism²³ caused the development of ritual that broke decisively from the older pattern associated with commemoration.

Mark McGovern regards the 'civic celebration and modern cult of the siege myth' as stemming from a celebration of the Relief of Londonderry in August 1772,²⁴ and refers to it as an 'invented tradition' or a 'revived ancient custom'. He states that the first recorded evidence of an organised celebration of the Shutting of the Gates was in 1775. Though he agrees that the centennial parades of 1788 and 1789 were 'crucial landmark events', a point made by A. T. Q. Stewart and Roy Foster, he does not ascribe the 'invention of tradition' to this particular point in time. He argues that there was a clear continuity from the early 1770s when the 'invention'

²¹ B. Walker, '1641, 1689, 1690 And All That: The Unionist Sense of History', *The Irish Review*, no. 12 (1992).

²² B. Walker, 'Remembering the siege of Derry: the rise of popular religious and political tradition, 1869-1989' in W.P. Kelly, *The Sieges of Derry* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2001), pp.123-144.

²³ *DP*, 23 Oct. 1857, 11 Jan. 1861.

²⁴ McGovern, 'Siege Myth', p.82.

of the Siege tradition really began.²⁵ Again it could be argued that a custom based in traditional Orangeism may have existed but it was sporadic, much less structured and a local event compared to the rituals of the late nineteenth-century. Moreover, it was an affirmation of the status quo rather than a protest against change.

Neil Jarman argues that as far as the Williamite parades were concerned, until the 1870s a custom existed that became a more formalised tradition that replaced the practices of the predominantly rural, lower classes.²⁶ This suggests a perceived change within the period under observation, 1859-85, but it can be argued that the change seen in the seventies, given a strong boost by disestablishment and Gladstonian Liberalism, actually originated from 1860 with the involvement of the evangelical, William Johnston. Dominic Bryan believes that although Hobsbawm did not rule out 'invention' in other periods, his definition was somewhat lacking when it came to traditions such as the Twelfth.²⁷

Ian McBride, in exploring the idea of 'invention' in Derry, wonders whether Mitchelburne's first raising of the crimson flag in the early eighteenth century would constitute an 'invention of tradition'.²⁸ It was certainly a commemorative act that became the basis of a custom which later became an aspect of 'invented tradition'. New traditions could be grafted onto older ones, reinforcing both.²⁹ Such 'inventions' were more successful when the discourse was already familiar to

²⁵ Ibid., p.133; Stewart, *Narrow Ground*, pp.71-73; R. F. Foster, *Modern Ireland 1600-1972* (London: Allen Lane, 1988), p.147.

²⁶ Jarman, *Material Conflicts*, pp.27-8.

²⁷ Dominic Bryan, *Orange Parades: The Politics of Ritual, Tradition and Control* (London: Pluto Press, 2000), pp.25-6.

²⁸ McBride, *Siege of Derry*, p.35.

²⁹ Hobsbawm and Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, pp.6-8.

those involved.³⁰ Hobsbawm uses the example of Swiss nationalism where older customs formed the basis of a 'powerful ritual complex' that included the display of flags, processions, bell-ringing, gun-salutes, dinners, toasts and oratory. He believes that from the new type of festival, where state and church merged, religious and patriotic elements evolve. Though there are obvious differences between the Swiss context and that of the Londonderry commemorations, there are also striking similarities in the ritual. However, before relating the concept of 'invention' to Londonderry and focussing on the relevant period 1859-1885, it is necessary to look at the earlier manifestations of the ritual. This needs to be examined in some detail to allow for comparison with the later period

Celebrations Before 1860

The rituals associated with the loyalist orders stem from the folk tradition of Orangeism which preceded the formation of the Orange Order (1795) by almost a century. The ideology behind the commemorations did not reflect the Irish campaign as 'a fringe event in a European war', as it might well have been from William's perspective, but as a decisive and glorious victory.³¹ Commemorations of the massacres of 1605 and 1641 had taken place earlier in the century, albeit in a celebratory manner, but Protestant victories now took precedence.³² The religious ceremonies associated with the events were aimed specifically at those who adhered to the Church of Ireland but street celebrations had a broader popular appeal and Presbyterian congregations also joined in the general commemoration of 'the Glorious Memory'.³³

³⁰ Ibid., p.263.

³¹ J. G. Simms, 'Remembering 1690', pp.231-33.

³² J. Kelly, 'The Glorious and Immortal Memory', p.30.

³³ Ibid., p.32.

The main physical expression of commemoration was in the parading culture. This ritual social behaviour could be traced back to the birthday of William III following his victory at the Battle of the Boyne. Such behaviour was first recorded in Dublin on 4 November 1690 when a military procession took place, bonfires were lit and church bells pealed and the Lord Justices hosted a dinner for the elite.³⁴ This became the pattern for royal and loyal anniversaries, a pattern which was not only local but common to Europe generally. However, in 1734, artwork celebrating William's landing at Carrickfergus in 1690, 'the glorious victory at the Boyne' and 'the valiant defence of Londonderry' was displayed in the new Irish House of Lords. Attention was drawn to this event by twenty soldiers from the Boyne and twenty Londonderry men marching through the streets of Dublin with cockades bearing the inscriptions: 'We defended Derry against famine and death, a Popish king and a French army' and 'We are the heroes that conquered the Boyne'.³⁵

What Kelly refers to as 'the cult of William' became established in the early eighteenth century.³⁶ This gave rise to an extended range of anniversaries commemorating William's memory and achievements, including battles fought and won. In 1740 on the anniversary of the Battle of the Boyne, the Protestant Society, whose membership embraced 'gentlemen, shopkeepers, dealers and tradesmen', processed to St. Catherine's Church in Dublin to hear an appropriate sermon. After dinner, preceded by drummers and trumpeters, and to the sound of pistol shots, they marched through the main thoroughfares of the city with orange cockades in their hats. With the rise of the radical 'Patriot' movement in the 1760s

³⁴ J Hill, 'National festivals', p.33; Kelly, 'Glorious and immortal memory', pp.30-31; Simms, 'Remembering 1690', p.234.

³⁵ Kelly, 'Glorious and immortal memory', p.37.

³⁶ Ibid., p.38.

and early 1770s, iconography included green boughs as well as orange cockades.³⁷

The Volunteer corps, radical in outlook, participated in Orange commemorative events in the 1780s and these occasions tended not to have a strong sectarian edge. Before 1790 what was celebrated was the status quo and represented the whole community. William III was regarded as the 'great deliverer', but delivery from 'popery' was only a small part. The main context for this was in his saving England, and subsequently Ireland, from 'monarchical despotism' and from falling under French domination. Moreover, he had confirmed the liberties of his subjects.³⁸ This was significantly different from celebrations of the nineteenth century.

The Volunteers included St. Patrick's Day as well as the Williamite festivals in their programme of commemorations. St. Patrick's Day had been celebrated at a popular level from the late seventeenth century, mostly, but not exclusively, by Roman Catholics. The activities at the Williamite festivals were, at this juncture, almost exclusively Protestant.³⁹ The Volunteers had a political agenda and lobbied for political change, though they were only really influential in Belfast and Dublin. (Outside these cities, more conservative elements retained supremacy, particularly at a popular level, at this period.⁴⁰) As part of the Volunteers' reform campaign, they held celebrations in these cities, in 1791, on Bastille Day.⁴¹ Catholic activists were similarly encouraged by revolution. When political rights for Roman Catholics emerged as an issue in 1792 there was a concentration on the

³⁷ Ibid, p.44.

³⁸ Hill, 'National Festivals', p.33.

³⁹ Ibid., pp.30-33.

⁴⁰ Hereward Senior, *Orangeism in Ireland and Britain 1795-1835* (London: Routledge, 1966), p.6.

⁴¹ Hill, 'National Festivals', p.35.

glories of the British Constitution by the opponents of emancipation and an emphasis on the importance of Protestant ascendancy as the real achievement of William III. The United Irish rebellion of 1798 reinforced this. Overall, the main effect of the Volunteers' actions in commemoration was to demonstrate how such occasions could be manipulated for political ends.⁴² This set a precedent for the Orange Order in the following century.

Popular Orangeism had an integral political orientation which related to the Whig political culture which was 'constructed in England and exported to the subordinate kingdoms and colonies of the British Empire'. Thus the sponsored festivals were used to affirm the existing political order.⁴³ Moreover, the orange symbolism later associated with the Orange Order, owed its origin to the wider popular Orangeism of earlier date. At the turn of the century the Orange Order clearly had no monopoly of the colour.⁴⁴ It was from this popular tradition that the Apprentice Boys' commemorations emerged.

Though there was a significant overlap between the membership of the Apprentice Boys and the Orange Order, when they marched on the Londonderry anniversaries, it was as Apprentice Boys taking part in a civic ritual. It was in the interest of the clubs, particularly in relation to the Party Processions Act, to emphasise that their commemoration was historical and civic and not motivated by political interest.

They (the radical and Roman Catholic press) represented, in opposition to truth and fact, that the celebrations of the Apprentice Boys were of a party character, that the object was to insult Roman Catholics, and that Orangemen were warned (sic) into town in great numbers to assist in the

⁴² Kelly, 'Glorious and immortal memory', pp.45-47.

⁴³ McBride, *Siege of Derry*, p.34.

⁴⁴ Hill, 'National Festivals', p.39.

celebrations: while it is well known to all persons conversant with history that the Apprentice Boys commemorate an historic event, which secured liberty for the nation, which placed the house which Her Majesty represents on the throne of these realms. No insult to creed or class is intended, and the warning in of Orangemen a sheer fiction. It is true that the Grand Lodge of the County Derry, numbering about twenty, met in Derry ... for Orangemen and all Protestants who deserve the name take an interest in the celebrations, but the meeting had nothing to do with the proceedings of the day.⁴⁵

This playing down of Orange links and sympathies would change as the 1860s proceeded, but in 1860 there were two distinct groups, the Apprentice Boys upholding folk tradition, enhanced by mythology specific to Londonderry, and the Orange Order with a quite separate agenda.

Though the Apprentice Boys' did not become official custodians of the anniversary commemorations until the early nineteenth century, the early commemorations first made an appearance in the early eighteenth century around the same time as the establishment of a short-lived club in 1714 by the siege hero, Colonel Mitchelburne.⁴⁶ The Mitchelburne Club of today claims a link with this early establishment.⁴⁷ The first commemoration may, in fact, stem from this year. Sibbett's history of Orangeism stated that in that year the crimson flag was hoisted on the cathedral steeple, a church service was held, cannon fired over the walls, and a dinner held at a local hotel followed by a dance in the town hall.⁴⁸ This piece of evidence, however, is uncorroborated and the first reliable evidence related to the diary of Bishop Nicholson (Bishop for Londonderry from 1718-1727), which states that on 1st August 1718, the crimson flag was hoisted for the first time from the steeple, the great guns were fired and a splendid dinner held followed by

⁴⁵ LS, 21 Dec. 1860.

⁴⁶ *Official Brochure of the Tercentenary Celebrations of the Apprentice Boys of Londonderry Association*, 1989, p.24.

⁴⁷ Tony Crowe, *The 150th Anniversary of The Mitchelburne Club 1854-2004* (Belfast: 2004), p.13.

⁴⁸ McBride, *Siege of Derry*, p.95.

fireworks and illuminations. The ritual of raising the crimson flag was perpetuated by Colonel Mitchelburne who left £50 in his will for that purpose.⁴⁹

The symbolic significance of the celebrations in this earlier period, however, did not reflect Protestant unity, as was the intention in the late nineteenth-century. There had been bad feeling between Episcopalians and Presbyterians, as a result of the test act of 1704. This had made the taking of the sacrament in an Anglican format a necessity for gaining public office.⁵⁰ The emphasis at this period was largely confined to the constitutional gains of the Glorious Revolution. McBride points out that in 1716, two years before the first recorded commemoration, there had been an elaborate celebration of the accession of George I. This was organised by the garrison, which had acknowledged the siege in its symbolism but had concentrated its attention on the rival houses of Hanover and Stuart.⁵¹ Here conservative constitutionalism was to the fore. The emphasis changed in the 1760s, with the rise of the 'Patriot' movement which claimed more independence for the Dublin parliament. This was a more inclusive period for Churchmen and Presbyterians, and indicated a comparative softening of attitude towards Roman Catholicism as the penal code was relaxed, though this was far from universal at ground level.⁵² This was represented by the rise of the Volunteer movement in 1778 which gave rise to an inclusiveness which stopped markedly short of granting the suffrage to Roman Catholics.⁵³ The patriotism expressed here, however, unlike that of the nineteenth-century, which eventually reflected either an affiliation to Britain or to Ireland, reflected constitutional rights and privileges with the Williamite battles of cardinal importance.

⁴⁹ John Hempton, *The Siege and History of Londonderry* (Londonderry, Dublin, London: 1861), p.411; McBride, *Siege of Derry*, p.36.

⁵⁰ McBride, *Siege of Derry*, p.24.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p.36.

⁵² Senior, *Orangeism*, p.6.

⁵³ McBride, *Siege of Derry*, p.33.

The centenary celebrations of 1788 and 1789 mirrored to a great extent the civic celebrations of the Glorious Revolution in English cities. The centenary celebrations were grander events based on the same pattern of church bells, drums, raising the crimson flag, discharging cannons, a church parade, albeit much more imposing than previously, and a church service at both the cathedral and Presbyterian meeting house.⁵⁴ Not only had the Volunteers and soldiers joined the parade but Roman Catholic clergy joined their Protestant counter-parts, an indication of qualified inclusiveness. In the Shutting of the Gates ceremony, Lundy was burned for the first time – not as part of the organised programme but by a popular element on the fringe of the events.⁵⁵ The symbolism at this point was reflected by the orange ribbons worn, still redolent of Williamite civic ceremonial.

With the rise of the United Irish movement, civic celebrations saw the inclusion of green ribbons and the cap of liberty in the liberal quarter, though not in the siege commemorations. Mark McGovern and Ian McBride highlight the celebrations after the 1790 election of William Lecky, backed by reformers, when there was an unusual mixture of orange and green iconography reflecting eighteenth century patriotism.⁵⁶ However, McBride emphasises that Londonderry did not support a mixed Catholic and Protestant company of Volunteers and at a Volunteer meeting in August 1784 did not support Catholic emancipation. Further, after the rebellion of 1798, Derry citizens supported the Act of Union of 1800. Castlereagh referred to Londonderry as 'the counterpoise to Belfast, and the rallying point for the loyalty

⁵⁴ See Chapter 3, p. 174.

⁵⁵ Crowe, *Mitchelburne Club*, p.34; McBride, *Siege of Derry*, p.41.

⁵⁶ McBride, *Siege of Derry*, p.42.

of the north'.⁵⁷ At this period, Belfast was regarded as a radical stronghold. Thus the early commemorations were to an extent malleable, reflecting the adaptability of the myth. They represented evolving custom rather than invented tradition.

In Londonderry, by 1813, the local annual parades had become more military in character with participants wearing Orange regalia and the Orange flag flown over the cathedral. This was a reference to William III rather than the Orange Order but this symbolism had by now other connotations for the Roman Catholics. This was the year when the motion for Catholic emancipation was first passed by the British House of Commons against a background of periodic conflict between Ribbonmen and Orangemen in county Londonderry. This was also the first occasion when objections were raised about the anniversary celebrations.⁵⁸ The Catholic community were becoming politicised and the nature of the celebrations, with their perceived connection to the Orange Order, became a sensitive issue. Protestant hegemony was being challenged. There were clashes in the early 1830s. Roman Catholics achieved a ban on all parades in 1832, imposed by the administration at Dublin Castle.⁵⁹

The consolidation of the Apprentice Boys' organisation⁶⁰ was paralleled by the evolution of shifting custom into a fixed format of ritual events. The Derry anniversaries reflected contemporary ideas about the role of ritual in public life as well as maintaining traditions. Such processions and ritual displays were a feature of the O'Connellite campaign. Both became significant features of political life in Ireland in the early nineteenth century, carefully staged to provide support

⁵⁷ Ibid., p.43.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p.47.

⁵⁹ See Ch 2, p.115.

⁶⁰ See Chapter 4, p. 268.

for their respective causes.⁶¹ These were secular ceremonies, with religious undertones, that drew on the active participation of those who attended. They included processions, oratory and banquets that had been part of Irish political culture for some time.⁶² However, loyalist parades were more militaristic in their conduct reflecting their early association with the yeomanry. As such, spectators were quite separate from the participants.⁶³ The siege celebrations were centred on particular locations, emphasising the cathedral, the Londonderry walls and the cannons that had been mounted on them during the siege. Cannons continued to play an important part in the siege ceremonies and were pulled round the city by the clubs. Their continued use as part of the commemoration was in recognition of their being fired after the thanksgiving service after the siege was lifted in 1689.⁶⁴

In Londonderry, the evolution of ritual had much to do with the combination of strong leadership at challenging times. An early instance of this was reflected in the first third of the nineteenth century by Sir George Hill and Rev. John Graham. Reflecting the conservative reaction that occurred as a result of the instability of the times, especially in view of the United Irish rebellion (1798), Sir George Hill, commander of the yeomanry, conducted the commemorations in military style. Rev. John Graham (1776-1844), Anglican rector of Magilligan in County Londonderry was also actively involved. Graham was an evangelical and 'involved himself in the theological disputes of the Second Reformation'. His fame as a 'Williamite orator' resulted in his appointment as senior chaplain to the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland. He wrote three volumes of Irish history and a history of

⁶¹ Gary Owens, 'Nationalism Without Words: Symbolism and Ritual Behaviour in the Repeal 'Monster Meetings' of 1843-5' in *Irish Popular Culture 1650-1850*, ed. by K.A. Miller J. S. Donnelly, (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1998), p.243.

⁶² Hill, 'National Festivals', p.32.

⁶³ Alan Aldridge, *Religion in the Contemporary World: A Sociological Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), p.151.

⁶⁴ C. D. Milligan, *The Murray Club Centenary* (Londonderry: Londonderry Sentinel, 1947), p.14.

the siege of Derry and contributed prolifically to Irish newspapers.⁶⁵ His poems included 'The Shutting of the Gates' (1821), and were quite famous in Ulster, known intimately in loyalist households.⁶⁶ He regularly appeared at the head of the procession with Sir George Hill, riding a white horse.⁶⁷

Under the aegis of Hill and Graham, the commemorations took on a more pronounced anti-Catholic edge than in much of the previous century and this had much to do with the threat of Emancipation (1829). This is clear from Sir George Hill's speech against the influence of the papacy in British politics via the Roman Catholic Board from 1811-14 and their subsequent progress.⁶⁸ It was also reflected in the reception of Mr. Dawson's speech in 1828. Mr. Dawson was MP for Derry and his speech reflected a liberal view of the commemorations stressing the fact that it was just as proper for Roman Catholics to express gratitude for the exploits of their ancestors who were pledged to obey King James.⁶⁹ According to Sibbett, the assembly refuted this statement and subsequently a lampoon was published in the *Dublin Evening Mail*.⁷⁰ At this particular commemoration, there were more visitors from a distance as well as from the neighbouring countryside as a statue of Walker was uncovered on its new position on top of a pillar. Emphasis was put on the need to commemorate the deeds of Walker as the issue was not only local but of national significance – the message was that in Ireland crown, church and constitution were inviolate. However, it was not until the 1860s that this message shaped the ritual and it developed into an event with appeal across Ulster.

⁶⁵ BNL, 5 Nov. 1844.

⁶⁶ McBride, *Siege of Derry*, p.58.

⁶⁷ McGovern, 'Siege Myth', p.168.

⁶⁸ *The Times*, 30 Dec. 1824.

⁶⁹ BNL, 15 Aug. 1828.

⁷⁰ R. M. Sibbett, *Orangeism*, pp.304-6.

The music and musketry of the early parades was discontinued as a result of the imposition of the Party Processions Act (in force from 1832-40). The clubs continued their anniversary commemorations during the periods of prohibition by restricting their public activities. In December 1838, for example, there was no procession because of the Act and ritual was confined to the dawn firing of five field pieces (small cannon) over the gates, the flying of the crimson flag from the cathedral, a flag bearing the date '1688' being raised from Walker's testimonial and the effigy of Lundy being suspended and burned from the roof of Corporation Hall. The cathedral bells rang out and there was further discharge from the cannons. A bottle and glass party was held for over five hundred. Those attending consisted mainly of a mix of middle rank and artisans with some thirty of higher rank and influence.⁷¹ These early restrictions were accepted. A challenge to such restrictions did not take place until the 1860s under the influence of William Johnston.

Examples of strained relations in the city can be illustrated by the riots on St. Patrick's Day in 1849. Repealers processed with green banners, drums and fifes and the Apprentice Boys responded to this provocation. The latter, who had associated themselves with opposing repeal of the Union in 1831,⁷² were reported to have torn one of the flags to ribbons in the clash.⁷³ In 1854, there was an Orange demonstration in Londonderry with the Earl of Enniskillen and other representatives from that county and clergy and gentry from Fermanagh. The decorations used were similar in many respects to those of the civic demonstration, with the crimson flag with 1688 suspended from Walker's pillar, and the Irish Society flag flying from the North West Bastion. The Apprentice Boys

⁷¹ *The Times*, 25 Dec. 1838.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 26 Mar. 1831.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 23 Mar. 1849.

stationed themselves along the Artillery Bastion and saluted the Earl as he passed by. (This is an indication of why the Apprentice Boys were believed to be associated with the Orange Order.) The men of Enniskillen and Londonderry pledged themselves to use every lawful effort to maintain the glorious privileges purchased at so great a cost by their ancestors; they also pledged to uphold the fundamental principles of the British constitution. The train returning the visitors to their neighbouring counties was derailed by activists causing one death and two serious injuries.⁷⁴ The coroner's verdict was that the derailment was the result of a 'Riband conspiracy'.⁷⁵ These examples indicate a pronounced level of religious and political division within the community.

Orange processions were prohibited again under the Party Processions Act (1850) though the civic commemorations were allowed to continue. They did, however, invite the type of unrest that was often the response to Orange marches. The Party Emblems Act (1860) reinforced the Party Processions Act by bringing other public displays under restriction. While the Party Emblems Bill was going through parliament, the Apprentice Boys had been at pains to emphasise the civic aspect of their activities and downplay any Orange Order influence. In December 1860, for example, the *Sentinel* refuted allegations by the *Standard* that Orangemen had been brought in from other areas for the celebrations while claiming that the Orangemen had come to Derry for a meeting of their own organisation. It stated that though Orangemen had a natural interest in the local celebrations, they did not have any direct organisational involvement.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Ibid., 19 Sept. 1854.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 16 Oct. 1854.

⁷⁶ *LS*, 21 Dec. 1860.

The point was that though the majority of the members may well have been Orangemen, what they were celebrating was a historic event with religious connotations. The frequent indignant references to the earlier constitutional Orangeism as a means to legitimate the Orange trappings of the celebrations, suggest the perception existed in the wider community that the Orange Order was active within the Apprentice Boys' organisation. To avoid any accusations of 'party' activity, it was therefore regarded by club leaders in 1850 as politic to have crimson, the colour of Mitchelburne's flag, associated with the siege anniversaries. The orange ribbons of traditional Orangeism, now associated with the Orange Order which had become linked with the Conservative party, were replaced by red, the colour of sacrifice. Rev. Edward G. Dougherty said that he was one of the first to wear crimson. Orange and blue, he stated, were the original colours, but when the Party Procession Act was passed, they were not able to wear orange.⁷⁷ By 1859, underplaying the Orange role by the Apprentice Boys was well established. Twenty years later, banners welcomed Orangemen to the city.

Confrontation and Transformation, 1860-1885

By 1857, the basic pattern of commemoration consisted of two processions around the walls on each anniversary, with cannons. The ritual involved with the Relief of the City commemorations in August constituted Mitchelburne's crimson flag flying from the chancel of the cathedral, the city flag from Walker's pillar, the royal standard and British ensign from the south west bastion above 'Roaring Meg', the most famous of the siege guns. The day was ushered in by a salute of artillery and at 7 a.m. the Apprentice Boys went in procession around the walls

⁷⁷ Ibid., 14 Aug. 1877.

observing the usual ceremony of opening the gates with ten field pieces. The church parade and service took place in the morning and at 3 p.m. the Apprentice Boys assembled. Cannons were fired from the Church and Mall Walls and at 6 p.m. the flags were lowered to the accompaniment of a heavy artillery salute.⁷⁸

The Shutting of the Gates commemoration was slightly different in content. In December 1857, there was a dawn discharge of artillery from the Royal Bastion. Flags flew from the cathedral and Walker's pillar and the effigy of Lundy had been placed at Walker's feet. At 8 a.m. the Apprentice Boys were in position on the Mall Wall and at the Artillery Bastion. Shots were fired, the cathedral bells pealed. Then the Apprentice Boys marched with insignia to the cathedral. After a religious service there, the clubs marched through Society Street, traversed the city walls to Shipquay gate, and then returned to Corporation Hall. At 2.30 p.m. they were at the firing positions on the walls and shots were fired. They, along with members of the public who had gathered on the walls to observe, gave three cheers for the Queen. The effigy of Lundy was burned and the evening ended with fireworks and a soiree.

In August 1860, there was the important incident with the Bishop's refusal to allow the flag to be hoisted from the cathedral.⁷⁹ This incident, together with the imposition of the Party Emblems Act brought about the involvement of Johnston in the anniversaries. Johnston's involvement was to buoy up resistance in Londonderry. This incident was widely reported, the *Belfast Newsletter* predicting that the clubs would gain the countenance of many who had previously held aloof from the commemorations, increase the general popularity of the events and

⁷⁸ Ibid, 14 Aug. 1857.

⁷⁹ See Chapter 2, pp.130-1.

augment club membership.⁸⁰ With the Party Emblems Act now in force, numbers attending the following December were much greater. William Johnston and Rev. Thomas Drew attended and greeted the church procession at the door of the cathedral.⁸¹ Two stipendiary magistrates were brought to the city, as were troops of infantry and dragoons, as clashes between the celebrants and protesters from the Roman Catholic community were anticipated. The guns were not allowed to be used as part of the ritual.⁸²

In August 1861, the guns were fired and a band played as part of the afternoon gathering on the walls. Bands were to become a noted feature of the ritual from the sixties onwards. That December the guns were again fired but the ritual was scaled down in response to the death of the Prince Consort. A few extra police had been called in anticipation of trouble but they were not necessary. In 1862, the band of the Apprentice Boys played as part of the afternoon sessions and, the following year, the church procession was preceded by a band and flags were carried and brought into the cathedral. The significance of the dispute with the First Presbyterian Church regarding the housing of the flags during the religious part of the ceremonies was the refusal of the clubs to abandon a new practice – the carrying of flags to church had not been a specific feature of the commemoration till this point.⁸³ In December 1864, the custom had further evolved in that the procession was headed by the Maiden City Band and ‘very handsome banners were carried’. The Mitchelburne Club, in particular, had a ‘beautiful silk flag with Mitchelburne on it’.⁸⁴

⁸⁰ *BNL*, 14 Aug. 1860.

⁸¹ See Ch 1, p.76.

⁸² *LS*, 21 Dec. 1860.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 16 Aug. 1864; See Chapter 2, p. 153.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 20 Dec. 1864.

Details of ritual were becoming more important. While earlier in the sixties it was noted that crimson ribbons and sashes were worn by some of the Apprentice Boys, by December 1865 'almost all' wore a crimson sash or collar.⁸⁵ (It is important to note that when the 12 August or 18 December fell on a Sunday, as it did in August 1866, Sunday protocol was strictly observed. Religious propriety demanded that the use of guns was restricted to the dawn firing and in the procession to church, music was not played. The more popular part of the commemoration took place the following day.)

The following December (1865), Johnston, attending for the fourth time since December 1860, gave an important speech about the importance of not allowing the commemorations to be kept as a merely local event as Londonderry had significance for all Protestant Irishmen.⁸⁶ He interpreted the siege myth in evangelical terms, comparing Derry to God's ark in a desolated land, not only of God's people but God's truth, meaning Protestantism. 'Derry was saved as a lesson to all Protestant people forever'. He emphasised how it was important for people not to alienate themselves from God's covenant. This enhanced the religious aspect of ritual parades and encouraged involvement from across Ulster. Further, he attempted to bind the organisation more strongly to the Orange Order which, he claimed, held the same Protestant principles.⁸⁷

The following year the band, with new uniforms, headed the procession with the club leaders bearing flags. August 1867 saw a further increase in support from outside Londonderry with influential visitors coming to the city. (People had always attended from the countryside around the city but the advent of trains in the

⁸⁵ Ibid., 19 Dec. 1865.

⁸⁶ See Chapter 4, pp.253-4.

⁸⁷ LS, 19 Dec. 1865.

1850s made the celebrations accessible to those further afield.) That year there was a special train from Belfast (and stations en route) containing about 1200 supporters. There were also visitors from other localities including County Down. The local Britannia Flute Band and the Ballymena Union Band preceded the clubs playing tunes and also played on other occasions during the day. The colours were carried through Pump Street, Ferryquay Street, Orchard Street, Foyle Street and Bishop Street.⁸⁸

Those attending the celebration must have displayed a certain amount of Orange symbolism as instructions were given for the December commemoration that party emblems (signifying the Orange Order) should not be worn and only crimson and blue flags were to be carried.⁸⁹ Crimson and blue had been adopted as Londonderry's colours in response to the Party Processions Act of 1832. With these instructions, special care was being taken to avoid the imagery of the more political Orange Order as the Party Processions Act was still in force. (The Party Emblems Act lapsed in 1865.) Distinctions had also been made about what constituted loyal and party tunes and this was reinforced at this time with special guidance being given as to what would be appropriate.⁹⁰ This tightening up of proceedings was a result of increasing pressure from the Catholic community to have the commemorations banned. The Protestant response to such pressure was also reflected by the increased numbers of visitors and this became a feature of the anniversaries. They were now much more popular within Ulster than earlier in the century and there was significant swelling in numbers when there was a political stimulus such as disestablishment or home rule.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 13 Aug. 1867; See Appendix 4.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 20 Dec. 1867.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 20 Dec. 1867.

On 20th July 1868, some Apprentice Boys were involved in an incident associated with the electoral process. This reflected the concerns about the possible result of the 1867 Reform Act as Londonderry would no longer be a 'safe seat' for the Conservatives. Some members of the organisation, along with like-minded individuals, came armed with bludgeons to gain entry to a meeting held by the Liberal candidate in the forthcoming election, who had the support of both Liberal Presbyterians and Roman Catholics. This indicates a heightened level of political activity. The Liberal candidate, Sergeant Dowse, was subsequently elected, unseating Lord Claud Hamilton, the Conservative candidate and representative of the landed interest and the status quo.⁹¹

On the anniversary of the Relief of Derry some three weeks later, there was more evidence of political activity as a contingent from Belfast and Down arrived with William Johnston who was greeted at the station by the heads of the clubs. The format of the meeting following the church service was clearly more politically inspired and formal with resolutions read pledging opposition to the proposed disestablishment of the Church of Ireland – though disestablishment was regarded as much a religious as a political matter.⁹² By the end of November, Johnston had become both MP for Belfast and Grand Master of the Belfast Grand Lodge. In December, however, the procession marched without music and with flags furled to the cathedral.⁹³ This was a mark of respect for the recent death of the much revered evangelical Conservative, Rev. Henry Cooke.

From 1869, there was a further marked deterioration in the relationship between the Apprentice Boys and the Roman Catholic community. In April, there were

⁹¹ *Inquiry, Londonderry*, pp.8-10.

⁹² Alexander, *Primate Alexander*, p.230.

⁹³ *LS*, 22 Dec. 1868.

severe riots resulting from competition and ill-feeling between the Apprentice Boys' band and a Catholic Hibernian band, each with flags and emblems parading on the occasion of the visit of Prince Alfred to the city. The perception of the Apprentice Boys was that the Catholic band had been given precedence and that it had shown disrespect by carrying a flag that carried a harp without a crown. The police and the two opposing groups clashed and there were two resulting deaths.⁹⁴ This resulted in the city being proclaimed, under the Peace Preservation Act of 1865, which meant that coercive measures could be imposed on the city to restrict the possibility of conflict.

As a result of the restrictions, the cannons, until this point central to the ritual, were to be silenced.⁹⁵ The conditions of the Peace Preservation Act remained in place for eleven years. They were part of the measures introduced, mainly against agrarian unrest, to aid the governance of Ireland.⁹⁶ Guns were not to be used or carried within the proclaimed area and constabulary could be increased at the expense of the city. Such impositions did not affect the general character and conduct of the displays. In years when violence was anticipated an agreed agenda was sometimes put in place for the ritual to allow the police and military to be most effective in their preparations, though, in other years, suggestions from the magistrates were refused.⁹⁷ However, the Lord Lieutenant could issue special proclamations in certain years imposing other restrictions as required by circumstances. For example, in 1871 the procession, general assemblage and any other display at the December anniversary was prohibited.⁹⁸ Local magistrates

⁹⁴ *BNL*, 30 Apr. 1869.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 11 Aug. 1869.

⁹⁶ I. S. Leadam, 'Coercive Measures in Ireland 1830-1880', (*LSE Selected Pamphlets*, 1880).

⁹⁷ *BNL*, 17 Dec. 1869.

⁹⁸ See Appendix 1.

could enforce additional restrictions.⁹⁹ This Act continued in force, being applied year by year or for a set number of months, until it was allowed to expire in 1880. A new Act was imposed early in 1881. One of the arguments for its necessity was its usefulness in areas where 'party' spirits ran high, processions took place and unlicensed firearms were carried.¹⁰⁰

There does seem to have been a strengthening of ties between the Apprentice Boys and the Orange Order at this juncture. At an Orange Protestant demonstration in the Botanic Gardens in Belfast on 25 May 1869, at which William Johnston presided, John Guy Ferguson pledged the support of the Apprentice Boys to the cause of opposing disestablishment. On 8th June 1869 at the Great Orange and Protestant Demonstration at Killyman, Co. Tyrone, Rev. Robert Donnell registered his support as a Presbyterian minister and that of the Apprentice Boys.¹⁰¹

Of central significance in the August celebration in 1869 was the honour given to William Johnston.¹⁰² He was presented with a gold medal and sash at the meeting at Corporation Hall before the procession to the cathedral. The Apprentice Boys honoured him for his support and advocacy of the Protestant cause, for his suffering imprisonment for his leading an Orange march in Bangor and for his championing of the Protestant cause in the House of Commons. The medal bore the inscriptions 'Presented to William Johnston, Esq. MP, by his bother Apprentice Boys of Derry, 12 August 1869', '7th December 1688', '1st August 1689', 'Apprentice Boys of Derry, No Surrender', 'Vita, Veritas, Victoria'. In the centre of the medal there was a representation of the Derry arms, and on the back an

⁹⁹ See Appendix 2.

¹⁰⁰ *Hansard*, 19 May 1881, vol. 261, c.796.

¹⁰¹ *BNL*, 25 May 1869, 8 June 1869.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 13 Aug. 1869.

impression of Governor George Walker. Johnston responded to the presentation by encouraging steadfastness in observing the anniversaries.

Our loyalty to the Throne has been reckoned on to neutralise our loyalty to our country. If the two should ever come into collision, to our country the higher allegiance is due. In the interest of our country, we keep up these commemorations; in the interest of an unbetrayed posterity, we refuse to barter liberty beneath the crimson banner.¹⁰³

The *Belfast News-Letter* reported tens of thousands flocking to the assistance of the Apprentice Boys on this occasion: the celebrations of previous years faded into comparative insignificance.¹⁰⁴ In defiance of the proclamation, guns were fired so there was relatively little change to the usual programme. What differed was the scale of the event. From an early hour, people flocked to the city from rural districts and special trains came from Belfast, Antrim, Ballymena, Ballyclare, Ballymoney, Coleraine, Omagh and Enniskillen. The order of the procession is given in Appendix 3. This contrasted with the simple procession of August 1860 which consisted of the Apprentice Boys clubs only.¹⁰⁵

The route the procession took was: from the city wall to Bishop Street, the Diamond, Ferryquay Street to Ferryquay Gate, along Carlisle Road, Abercorn Road, to Bishop Street again and the Diamond. Then the procession, which included an element of counter-marching, went along Shipquay Street, Waterloo Place, the Strand Road, the Asylum Road, Queen Street, Clarendon Street, Francis Street and Great James' Street returning to the Diamond, Bishop Street and the Mall Wall by Stable Lane.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ LS, 12 Aug. 1869.

¹⁰⁴ See Appendix 3.

¹⁰⁵ LS, 17 Aug. 1860.

¹⁰⁶ BNL, 14 Aug. 1869; See Appendix 4.

Johnston continued to raise the profile of Derry in other parts of Ulster. On 7th December 1869, he wore the medal he had been presented with at Derry to a meeting of the Duke of York Orange Lodge, Molesworth Hall, Dublin. He stated that the Orange Order was essentially a religious society and that they did not bring politics into their religion but their religion into politics. He said that a wrong had been done in Parliament (disestablishment) but that must not be allowed to divide them from the Bible Protestants of England and Scotland. He emphasised that every eye would be fixed on Derry in the coming days and they would never surrender the crimson banner which reminded them of the Protestant religion and liberties of the land and that, as Orangemen, they would follow their religious convictions in the political arena.¹⁰⁷ That December anniversary was one of the best attended commemorations with hundreds being unable to gain entry to the cathedral.¹⁰⁸ A statement had been issued by the Working Men's Liberal Defence Association threatening to stop the proceedings, by force if necessary (a move aimed at putting pressure on the authorities to ban the marches). The celebrations were not cancelled but a large number of troops and extra constables were brought into the city. There were no guns as part of the ceremony and public houses were closed as dictated by a special proclamation.¹⁰⁹ Up until this point, with the exception of December 1860, the guns had been used regularly as part of the ritual, albeit in defiance of the ban in August 1869.

The following year, in August 1870, there were reported to have been three thousand in the procession and four bands took part. The suggestion made in the editorial of the *Londonderry Sentinel* was that the nature (meaning tone) of the celebrations had been changed significantly by the threats of the previous year.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 9 Dec. 1869.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 20 Dec. 1869.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

The perception was that the Church Act (disestablishment) had given confidence to the political element in the Catholic community which attempted to further their success by having the parades banned. It was claimed that their action had only resulted in raising the profile of the celebrations in other parts of the country.¹¹⁰ There was a counter demonstration by the Roman Catholics and serious rioting in the city.¹¹¹

In December 1870, ten thousand reportedly attended, and a large number of troops were called in. The crimson flag was not allowed to be raised and the effigy of Lundy would have been confiscated had it been found by the police – it was eventually burned in an impromptu manner by the members who had managed to conceal it throughout the day. The riot act was read and Lord John Claud Hamilton took notes on the perceived interference with civil liberties.¹¹²

In August 1871, five stipendiary magistrates were called to the city and they issued a proclamation banning assembly. This was not regarded by the Apprentice Boys and their advisers as legal. Walker's Pillar and the Royal Bastion were cordoned off by police and there was a guard put on the Corporation Hall. There was not supposed to be a procession but some of those walking to attend the church service put on their sashes. William Johnston was one. His message to the Apprentice Boys was 'Have the honour of your city at heart and give no offence. Do these and the blessings of God, you cannot doubt, will rest upon you.' In December, there was a special proclamation by the Lord Lieutenant banning the proceedings in their entirety. This ban was also flouted. The Corporation Hall was occupied by the constabulary and the membership were refused entry. William

¹¹⁰ *LS*, 16 Aug. 1870.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 20 Dec. 1870.

Johnston and other representatives challenged this, and were thrust back.

Johnston then headed the procession to the cathedral. The cavalry charged repeatedly but no serious injuries were sustained by those in the procession.

Johnston later gave a speech in which he stated that he had violated the proclamation and dared the government to take action. Lundy suffered another impromptu burning, this time suspended from a house in Shipquay Street.¹¹³

These were significant years. Compared to the thirties when such bans were accepted, there was considerably more resolution and determination not to allow what would have been perceived as a Roman Catholic victory. Johnston played a central role. The *Times* correspondent reported that he appeared to have assumed chief command of the anniversaries.¹¹⁴ He stated also that the active sympathy of leaders such as Johnston had confirmed in the Apprentice Boys the belief that they were maintaining a constitutional principle.¹¹⁵ They were also confirming divine approval. The comment of a Protestant spokesman at the time is significant. He stated that the Apprentice Boys had not closed the gates of the city because of Whig principles, but to protect the Protestant religion.¹¹⁶ The religious significance of the Williamite revolution had overtaken its constitutional aspects, reflecting the convictions and commitment of the evangelical leaders.

In 1872, the anniversaries passed with relatively little trouble. The August commemoration was reported to have been the largest and 'most respectable' in many years. Johnston had been successful in overthrowing the Party Processions Act and was at that point in Canada giving his support to the Orange Order there. The Peace Preservation Act was in force but there was no special proclamation.

¹¹³ Ibid., 15 Aug., 19 Dec. 1871.

¹¹⁴ The *Times*, 14 Aug. 1871.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 20 Dec. 1871.

¹¹⁶ McBride, *Siege of Derry*, p.54.

Anniversaries in 1873 and 1874 followed what had now become an established format with strong attendance but perhaps not the huge numbers which turned out in years of specific conflict or adversity. Also, as an expression of solidarity, in December of 1873, Lundy was burned in Belfast and Lisburn.¹¹⁷ Such events became more common as Orange Lodges celebrated what was an important date in their own calendar.

In August 1875, trains brought in representatives from Donegal, County Londonderry, Tyrone, Fermanagh, and Antrim. The visitors, which included Belfast Orange Lodge 154, in Orange regalia, were met at the station by the Maiden City Band and escorted to Corporation Hall. (It is worth noting the appearance of Orange regalia once the Party Processions Act was lifted. Unlike December 1860 when steps were taken to dissociate the commemorations from the Orange Order, the emblems were now embraced.) Participation was from across Ulster. The bands in the procession were the local Britannia Brass Band, the Maiden City Flute Band, the Churchill Flute Band, the Johnston Flute Band, the Belfast Constitutional Brass Band, the Newtonstewart Abercorn Flute Band, and the Newtonlimavady Flute Band. There was a new flag for the No Surrender Club – large and scarlet with a white centre in which was depicted the bust of George Walker. A blue bannerette also appeared on Bishop Street with the names of the thirteen apprentice boys inscribed on it.¹¹⁸ That December there were fourteen banners, and thirty Foyle College boys wearing red and white rosettes joined the ranks in the procession. The route of the procession now went beyond the city walls encompassing Carlisle Road, Abercorn Road and Bishop

¹¹⁷ LS, 20 Dec. 1867.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 14 Aug. 1875.

Street (without). After the procession, there was a soiree and bazaar for the new Memorial Hall fund at which the mayor presided.¹¹⁹

In August 1876, there were supporters from Dublin, Belfast and Tyrone as well as more local visitors. There were also delegations from Canada and Australia.¹²⁰ The August commemoration of 1877, which featured the opening of Memorial Hall, reportedly saw a crowd of twenty thousand including twenty-five bands and more than fifty banners. The processionists, marching four deep, completely covered the extent of the walls. The extended route went from Foyle Road into Shore Road, into Bishop Street, up Bishop Street (without), Bishop Street (within), the Diamond (East), Shipquay Street to Gate, Waterloo Place, Great James Street, Infirmary Road, Clarendon Street, Strand Road, Foyle Street up John Street to Bridge, Carlisle Road, Ferryquay Street, Diamond (West), Butcher Street to Gate, Meetinghouse Row to the wall at Society Street, then a circuit of walls moving south to arrive at Corporation Hall. Artistic arches appeared over the main streets – the largest over Bishop Street with the inscription ‘Welcome Protestants and Orangemen to the city of Londonderry’. The one over Shipquay Street included the American stars and stripes.¹²¹

The commemorations during the seventies were punctuated by outbreaks of violence; some events passed peacefully while others did not. There was always an enhanced police presence, as a result of the city being proclaimed, but in some years the threat of violence was greater than others and the police presence reflected this. In some years, such as August 1876, it was made clear that visiting bands would be escorted to the station by a local contingent in case of trouble. In

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 21 Dec. 1875; See Appendix 4.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 15 Aug. 1875.

¹²¹ Ibid., 14 Aug. 1877.

August 1879, invitations were not issued in case visitors were targeted but a number arrived anyway as the railway laid on excursions.

This was the situation in August 1880 when the guns were restored to the ceremony. By now garlands, ornamental devices and arches over some of the streets accompanied the customary flags over the cathedral, South West Bastion and Walker's Pillar. The devices, generally large rectangular constructions depicted aspects of the siege such as names of the apprentice boys, a crown, the *Mountjoy*, etc. There were a 'vast' number of supporters from the neighbouring counties. The excursionists came as individuals, not in a lodge group accompanied by a band. The Orange Lodge, Shankill, from Belfast was the exception as forty of its members joined the procession. They had an orange and purple banner depicting when the relief ships were first sighted. Each Apprentice Boys' Club now had a blue or crimson banner to accompany their crimson flags. In the evening one hundred and ninety-one shots were fired. Again, there were no special invitations to contingents outside Derry: the procession was confined within the walls.¹²²

The celebrations during the early to mid 1880s followed the trend set in the 1870s in style of procession, banners, arches and bands. A difference between the August and December celebrations had now become established with the summer event becoming the major event. In earlier years the December anniversary was the main event. As always the support came from within the city and visitors from adjoining areas but the occasion was enhanced by the main social event of the year with a large number of influential guests. Now no longer a local event, the summer anniversary drew contingents from all over the North, probably because a

¹²² Ibid., 14 Aug. 1880.

summer event would attract greater numbers. Also, the winter celebration was associated with a dinner and ball, to which guests were specifically invited. 700 observed the December event in 1884, the winter procession now confined to members of the Apprentice Boys clubs. The August 1885 event drew 10,000-11,000 many of whom were allowed to take part in the procession.¹²³

Again, numbers rose as a reflection of political circumstances registering a statement of support for Conservatism and the status quo. August 1886, showed the way things were to develop in future years with the Belfast branch of the Walker Club joining the event. Branch clubs were now able to become established outside Londonderry in the manner of Orange lodges. In December 1887, Colonel Edward Saunderson M.P., of the Ulster Loyalist Party, attended the social gathering.¹²⁴ In August 1888, there were many special trains as contingents from the new Apprentice Boys Clubs in Belfast, Lurgan and other areas came to swell the already large numbers.¹²⁵

The bicentennial celebrations in 1888 and 1889 were particularly well attended events. The Shutting of the Gates commemoration in December did not follow the now established pattern of members only. The support came from 'the entire Protestant population of the city' and 'thousands' came from other counties by special trains to swell the numbers.¹²⁶ The procession to the cathedral was joined by the mayor, aldermen and councillors, lieutenants of counties and corporation officials. Banners were draped from a number of citizen's homes. The programme reflected the centenary event but with the enhanced numbers and pageantry of the late nineteenth century.

¹²³ Ibid., 19 Dec. 1884, 13 Aug. 1885.

¹²⁴ *BNL*, 19 Dec. 1887.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 14 Aug. 1888.

¹²⁶ *LS*, 20 Dec. 1888.

10.30	Apprentice Boys muster on Walls and march to Corporation Hall where Mayor and Corporation join in
11.30	Presentation of colours and divine service in Cathedral
1.30	Procession round walls
3.30	Burning of Lundy
6.00	Display of fireworks and banquet
8.30	Soiree
10.00	Illumination of Walker's Pillar, Memorial Hall and Corporation Hall with lights and special devices

The event was more inclusive in that Liberal Unionist Presbyterians were in attendance but less so than the event a century previously where the Roman Catholic clergy attended. At that earlier event, the patriotism reflected was Irish while retaining a special relationship with Britain. In the late nineteenth-century, inclusive meant Liberal and Conservative Protestantism. After a quarter of a century of political disagreement involving the nature of commemoration, they were at one in wishing to retain Union with Britain.¹²⁷

In the Relief celebrations of 1889, the Mayor and Corporation again joined the procession, believed to be one of the largest ever held in the city. In this procession the usual clubs were joined by Belfast branches of the Apprentice Boys' Club, Walker Club and No Surrender Club. In future years, the proliferation of these clubs in the commemorations would hugely increase their scale. A pageant based on the 'breaking of the boom' was staged at 8 a.m. at Boomhall, an estate on the river. There were decorative arches over the main thoroughfares, on the Walls, bannerettes from windows, and a plethora of decoration in the loyal

¹²⁷ Ibid.

areas of the city. The march followed the extended route beyond the city walls.¹²⁸ The bicentennial events differed from the centenary commemorations in being not only an Ulster wide but Ulster owned event. The commemorations had become high profile events that were increasingly important to the cultural identity of Ulster.

The period of 1860-1885 was exceptional in the development of the Londonderry commemorations. Before this period, the anniversaries were relatively low key events drawing on the tradition of pre-1795 Orangeism. However, these traditions were similarly affected by political circumstances. Before 1790 they mainly reflected the perceived 'great deliverance' by William III, except for a period in the 1780s when the commemorations were used by the radical Volunteers to help convey the desire for political change. After 1792, they reflected the desire to oppose emancipation and uphold the Constitution with its emphasis on Protestant ascendancy. Nonetheless, they remained a comparatively local event reflecting politics in a local context.

The period in the early nineteenth century, with the backdrop of emancipation, when the anniversaries had a higher profile and were most reported was under the aegis of the military organisation of Sir George Hill and the religious influence of the evangelical, Rev. John Graham. Again these commemorations were limited and local. A similar and more effective combination of organisation, personalities and evangelicalism came together in the early 1860s against the political background of rising Irish nationalism and a new type of Liberalism which was perceived to constitute a threat. In this period, the clubs developed from a loose confederation to a more integrated organisation. The influence of evangelical leaders, notably Johnston, had a significant impact. A tighter association with the

¹²⁸ Ibid., 13 Aug. 1889.

Orange Order, through these leaders, was established and a marshalling of support from all parts of Ulster ensued. The commemorations themselves, highlighting the myth of the siege of Derry, ceased to be a local event and their centrality to Ulster was established and built on as a major aspect of the cultural identity of Ulster Unionism.

Although arguments can be made for the 'invention' of the siege tradition in various periods, the most convincing evidence would appear to be in the period between 1860 and 1885. If the centennial celebrations of 1788 and 1789 are removed from the equation – though here a precedent was set for those of 1888 and 1889 – the celebrations throughout the eighteenth-century resembled more an evolving of custom than the phenomenon of 'invention of tradition' described by Hobsbawm. The nature of these earlier commemorations meshed readily with the military rituals of the Volunteers and yeomanry in the early nineteenth-century. The threatening implications of Emancipation, combined with the attributes of the evangelical John Graham, who encapsulated the mindset of evangelicalism gave the commemorations a sharper edge at this point in time. However, they did not compare in more than a superficial way to the level attained in the later period.

The fifties were a time of relative quiet probably as a result of compliance with the implementation of the Party Procession Act and the lack of a strong organising executive. The commemorations took place but the secular ritual tended to be underplayed. Robert Dougherty said that in this period, when Gregg and Hempton were taking the lead and when there were no banners and no shots were fired, the processions became almost extinct.¹²⁹ John Guy Ferguson corroborated this lack of initiative when he stated that, although attempts were made in the fifties to build

¹²⁹ Ibid., 14 Aug. 1877.

Memorial Hall so that the clubs could have their own base, they were not able to get the project off the ground.¹³⁰

From 1859, the period of Revival, there was a definite change in enthusiasm for the commemoration. Again evangelicalism provided a strong catalytic influence when united with Conservatism and Orangeism. Members such as William Johnston, who came from County Down to take part from 1860 and who was strongly evangelical, politically-minded, a member of the Orange Order and anti-Catholic in outlook took the organisation in a different direction. His agenda was to oppose Roman Catholicism with the same kind of religio-political weapons that he believed were part of its own armoury. The Governor, John Guy Ferguson was of the same mindset. Well-known Conservative Presbyterian evangelical ministers, such as Rev. Henry Cooke and Rev. Hugh Hanna who supported this religio-political approach visited Londonderry to give the anniversary sermons in the early sixties.¹³¹

The incident concerning the flag in 1860 galvanised evangelicals into action.¹³² At the following commemoration, William Johnston invoked the siege myth to justify the action of the members who had taken over the belfry and raised the flag. He congratulated those involved for being resolute. He commended them, also, for over-ruling the clerical advice not to fire the guns.¹³³ Religious fervour appeared to lend confidence and a resolve to stand up and be counted. In December 1860, the *Londonderry Sentinel* had been at great pains to dissociate the commemorations from the Orange Order, emphasising the civic nature of the

¹³⁰ Ibid., 20 Dec. 1877.

¹³¹ See Chapter 4, pp.283-4.

¹³² *LS*, 17 Aug. 1860.

¹³³ Ibid., 21 Dec. 1860.

event.¹³⁴ However, by August 1861, it was emphasising the necessity for involvement in politics to ensure survival, stating that though some might object to political influences in the commemorations, 'politics were an important part of moral philosophy' and were therefore of significance to the community.¹³⁵ This signalled a decisive change towards a religio-political agenda.

In December 1861, John Finlay stated how the Apprentice Boys were bound by the common bonds of evangelical truth in religion but not bound to party in politics.¹³⁶ This meant that what they supported was the constitutional Protestantism established under William III, not the contemporary Derbyite Conservatism. In 1863, John Guy Ferguson asserted that they were Reformation men in doctrine and Revolution men in principle.¹³⁷ This was the creed associated with the Orange Order. The conservative nature of their views was emphasised in their wishing to preserve what was good – the old ways. As the sixties progressed, the combination of evangelicalism and the politics of the Orange Order became a potent force and, as the threats to Church and land and implications of the extended franchise became more apparent, involvement in politics and the necessity for a strong cultural identity specific to the Protestants of the North became a priority. Crucially a change was made in the Apprentice Boys' constitution that opened the membership to outsiders – membership was no longer confined to those who lived in Derry itself.¹³⁸ A bid was underway to establish a united Protestant base within Ulster.

¹³⁴ Ibid.,

¹³⁵ Ibid., 16 Aug. 1861.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 20 Dec. 1861.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 22 Dec. 1863.

¹³⁸ *Inquiry, Londonderry*, min. 5536.

It was evident from 1863 that the organisation was changing politically. The high point was reached at the period of disestablishment of the Church of Ireland in 1869, perceived by some as the first step in dissolving the Union between Britain and Ireland, and coinciding with the threat of physical violence from Roman Catholics to stop the commemorations. Hobsbawm indicated that changes associated with invention of tradition occur more readily in a society experiencing rapid transformation.¹³⁹ It was at this point that Protestant interest was perceived as being seriously under threat and the process of 'invention of tradition' escalated to establish a particular cultural identity for a separate Protestant community.

The changes were as much about what was going on in the background as what was in evidence in the streets on the days of the anniversaries.¹⁴⁰ In this the role of the press was particularly significant. The *Londonderry Sentinel* was taking every opportunity to project the siege myth and, through much of the period in question, held a debate in print, about whether the commemoration should take place, with the Liberal paper, the *Londonderry Standard* and the Roman Catholic paper, the *Londonderry Journal*. The *Standard's* opinion reflected the Liberal Presbyterian view expressed by Thomas Witherow but also indicated a distinct dislike of ritual.¹⁴¹ It was stated at the Commission of Inquiry into the riots in Derry in 1869 that a perceived reason for most ill feeling was the inflammatory articles of newspapers.¹⁴² Accounts of anniversary sermons and public meetings were reported in the local papers but also in other papers in the North such as the *Belfast Newsletter* and the sermons were often printed separately and circulated widely.

¹³⁹ Hobsbawm and Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, pp.4-5.

¹⁴⁰ See Chapter 4, pp.267.

¹⁴¹ See Chapter 2, p.171.

¹⁴² *Inquiry, Londonderry*, min. 5933.

Wider networks also had an impact. The machinery that the Orange Order was using of press, public meetings, contact with influential people and representation in parliament became part of the Apprentice Boys' armoury also. There was regular contact with the influential Dublin Club and a network was established that went well beyond local participation. John Guy Ferguson and Johnston had a close working relationship though Ferguson was located in Londonderry and Johnston in Down.¹⁴³ Johnston was referred to in the House of Commons inquiry as a hard-line influence¹⁴⁴ but he was also a reconciliatory one between the Apprentice Boys and the Orange Order. It was reported that there was a traditional rivalry between both organisations and regular fights occurred on anniversary occasions.¹⁴⁵

Johnston's role should not be underestimated. He brought the two organisations together, uniting them against a common foe. Johnston's influence became enhanced when he became an independent Conservative MP for Belfast in 1868. He was ultimately responsible for the removal of the Party Processions Act in 1872 which had affected the secular part of the commemorations since 1832.¹⁴⁶ There was greater involvement from Conservative evangelical clergy from other parts of Ulster lending respectability to the events.

What was evident at this point was the clear establishment of religio-political agendas. Politics were gaining increasing prominence but religion was equally engaged and given an edge by evangelical fervour. This combination of religious and political interests was an aspect of evangelicalism in Ulster culture and it had a high profile exponent in the person of William Johnston. There was a committed

¹⁴³ Diary, July, August 1869, PRONI, D880/2/21.

¹⁴⁴ *Inquiry, Londonderry*, min. 5855.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, min. 5850.

¹⁴⁶ See Chapter 1, p.32.

endeavour to introduce a manifestation of a specific ideology and identity.¹⁴⁷ This was a vital element of 'invented tradition'.

A reflection of the community tensions and the rising determination of the Apprentice Boys to maintain and improve their commemorations was seen in the development of the ritual which by the mid eighties bore little resemblance to the fifties, or for that matter to any previous period when the custom of commemoration was celebrated. The first sign of such development was seen in 1861 with the introduction of a band to the proceedings. 1863 saw the band leading the church procession where three flags were carried. The refusal to give up the flags was significant. An innovation in what was customarily an evolving and adapting format, it could easily have been altered. However, the move to introduce a format which was 'invariant' was underway and these new practices would in the future be referred to as traditional even though they originated in the early sixties. The *Londonderry Sentinel's* reference in 1870 to the commemorations as having been carried out in the past with the approbation of all classes and denominations was somewhat disingenuous in that the earlier commemorations bore no resemblance to a three thousand strong procession with many flags and banners, and four bands, following an extended route through the city.¹⁴⁸ The new format served an ideological purpose in that it projected a united Ulster identity as well as that of the city of Derry which held a firm position at the centre of that identity. This process accords well with Hobsbawm's criteria for 'invented tradition'.

¹⁴⁷ Hobsbawm and Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, pp.1-4.

¹⁴⁸ LS, 16 Aug. 1870.

By 1865, almost all members were wearing a crimson sash or collar. The importance of this regalia was emphasised by a special presentation of a sash and medal to Johnston in 1869.¹⁴⁹ The importance of the flags and banners were highlighted by the presentation of a flag to the Ballymacarrett Working Mans' Band – crimson silk boarded by gold fringes with the monogram of the band in the centre.¹⁵⁰ This appears to have been the norm for flags carried in the processions by the clubs and bands. The colour, crimson or blue would be decided and then a motto might be chosen to appear in the centre. Often the name of the club would be put on the flag to complement the motto, or just the name itself would appear.¹⁵¹ In December 1876, a new flag which was much admired appeared. It was mounted on two poles and had a painting of George Walker on it.¹⁵² This part of the ritual was also showing signs of development though the larger banners were the exception rather than the rule and these were usually attributed to the Orange Order.

As the period under review progressed, arches and more banners appeared, the route of the procession became significantly extended, a forum for political resolutions and speeches was inserted as part of the programme of events and trains brought in thousands of supporters from all over the North. By the 1880s, the scope and nature of commemorative anniversary was very different from the commemorations of the earlier part of the century and bore only a sketchy resemblance to the annual celebrations of the previous century. As stated earlier, Brian Walker agrees that the changes in the half century between 1839 and 1889 reflected a significant rise in popularity of the siege commemorations but held that until the end of that period relatively few people were affected when compared

¹⁴⁹ *BNL*, 13 Aug. 1869

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 13 Nov. 1873.

¹⁵¹ Milligan, *Murray Club*, pp. 20, 40; *LS*, 20 Dec. 1864.

¹⁵² *BNL*, 19 Dec. 1876.

with the twentieth-century scale of the event.¹⁵³ He argues that the change came after the clubs allowed branches in other locations, while retaining the tradition that new members had to be initiated within the walls of Londonderry. And, he argues, widespread involvement only took place after 1921.¹⁵⁴ However, this overlooks the process of invention of tradition that took place during the sixties, seventies and early eighties and the massive growth in scale that also took place.

Moreover, the pattern of development appears to conform to all three of Hobsbawm's overlapping types of tradition that constitute 'invention'.¹⁵⁵ First, the ritual symbolised a united Protestant community within Ulster, realised by 1885; second, it legitimised the institutions associated with it, such as the Church of Ireland, the constitution and the monarchy and emphasised Ireland's position as part of the British Empire, and third, it inculcated the beliefs and value system and conventions of behaviour, such as the perceived sacred duty of commemoration, to the younger generation. The development that occurred in the commemorative ritual in the period between 1859 and 1889 presented a selective view of the past and this 'invention of tradition' had an important role to play within Ulster Unionism.

Civil Religion

The concept of 'civil religion' can be traced back to the eighteenth-century and Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *The Social Contract*.¹⁵⁶ However, modern debate centres on the seminal article by Robert Bellah on 'Civil Religion in America'.¹⁵⁷ This concentrated on the Durkheimian idea that every group had a religious dimension and countered the 'Western concept' of religion which suggested a

¹⁵³ See page 295.

¹⁵⁴ Walker, 'Remembering the Siege', pp.131-2, 136.

¹⁵⁵ Hobsbawm and Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, p.9.

¹⁵⁶ Gerald Parsons, *Siena, Civil Religion and the Sienese* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), p.xiv

¹⁵⁷ R. Bellah, 'Civil Religion in America', *Daedalus*, no. 96 (1967) pp.1-21.

'single type of collectivity of which an individual can be a member of one and only one at a time'.¹⁵⁸ Bellah argued that a civil religion had sacred texts, sacred places, an annual ritual calendar of 'holy days' and symbolic 'sacrificial martyrs' - thus its seriousness and integrity demanded respect. Such attributes were features of the loyalist orders but the idea of Loyalism as a form of civil religion is hardly sustainable because of the lack of corporate identity within Ulster. This was due to a gradual and uneven progress in differing areas of the North towards mutually exclusive assertions of Irish or British identity resulting from reactions to political developments elsewhere in Ireland.¹⁵⁹ By 1885, any concept of civil religion in this geographical context would have to exclude one or other section of the community. The communities were separate entities looking in opposite directions for their 'realm of absolute meaning', one towards Protestant Britain and the other towards Catholic Ireland. However, an argument can be made that a form of civil religion developed in the mid to late nineteenth-century that united the Protestant community very much in the spirit of Bellah's concept.

Aldridge, in his study of religion in the contemporary world, sees civil religion in Northern Ireland as a symbol of division rather than unity. Quoting Bruce he argues that Northern Ireland was a stage for conflict between a nation on one hand (Ireland) and an ethnic group on the other (Ulster Protestants).¹⁶⁰ He argues that evangelical Protestant faith was the one secure basis of Ulster Protestant cultural identity being the only justification for the separation of the North from the South. Further, he states that it was also specifically anti-Catholic.¹⁶¹ In the period under review, however, evangelical unity was not yet a fait accompli as Liberal

¹⁵⁸ *Religion Today: A Reader*, ed. by Susan Mumm, Religion Today: Tradition, Modernity and Change, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), p.101.

¹⁵⁹ S. Connolly, et al, 'Imagining Belfast: Political ritual, symbols and crowds, [www. Identities.org.uk](http://www.Identities.org.uk), 2008, ESRC, p.1.

¹⁶⁰ Aldridge, *Religion in the Contemporary World*, p.150; S. Bruce, *God Save Ulster*, p.258.

¹⁶¹ Aldridge, *Religion in the Contemporary World*, pp.148-50.

Presbyterians tended to regard themselves as an out-group and were anti-establishment prior to the growth of pressure for home rule,¹⁶² Evangelical unity was promoted rather as a result of the commitment of Conservative leaders such as Johnston, Drew and Hanna. Nor was Catholicism perceived in the same way in Conservative and Liberal ideology. Though both were anti-Catholic, Liberals felt qualified toleration and compromise might be possible for the greater good; Conservatives believed no compromise was possible and Liberalism was equating truth with error. It was necessary for the conservatives in both religion and politics to find an accommodation with the Liberal element before a united front was established. This was only achieved in the mid 1880s with a spectrum of Protestant opinion represented within it.

In Ulster in the 1860s, a united evangelical community did not exist; in fact divisions between Liberals and Conservatives were becoming entrenched. Traditional Presbyterians embraced Liberal politics while conservative Episcopalians and Presbyterians became constitutional Conservatives rather than, necessarily, party men, as illustrated by Johnston's standing as an independent Conservative candidate for Belfast in 1868 to support the cause of Protestantism in parliament. The very displays that were supposed to signify unity were, at this point, a cause of disunity between Conservatives and Liberal Presbyterians for more than two decades in the mid to late nineteenth-century. The view of the Liberal Presbyterian was well expressed by Thomas Witherow, a Presbyterian minister and Professor of Church History at Magee College, Londonderry. In his work on *Londonderry and Enniskillen in the year 1689: the story of some famous battlefields in Ulster* he stated with respect to commemorations: that rather than

¹⁶² G. Peatling, Whatever Happened to Presbyterian Radicalism? The Ulster Presbyterian Liberal Press in the late Nineteenth Century, in *Politics and Power in Victorian Ireland*, ed. by R. Swift and C Kinealy, (Dublin: Four Courts, 2006), p.158.

hurt his neighbours' feelings (his neighbours being Roman Catholic), he would prefer to look at the past in a kindly spirit and have his neighbours rival one another in industry and peace.¹⁶³ The view of the political and theological conservative was that it was his moral duty to commemorate the anniversaries or he would be breaking God's covenant. Nonetheless, by the 1880s a form of unity was becoming established as a result of the efforts of evangelical leaders and in response to the threat of home rule. Previously opposing views came together in loose coalition with the aim of protecting the Protestant religion.¹⁶⁴

Richard Pierard and Robert Linder, in attempting to define the characteristics of civil religion, have suggested five necessary qualities that might occur in a variety of contexts. In the first instance, civil religion requires widespread acceptance of a shared sense of history and destiny. Secondly, it relates society to a realm of absolute meaning. Thirdly, it enables people to look at their society and community as special. Fourthly, it presents the nation as an integrated whole. Fifthly, it provides a collection of beliefs, values, rites, ceremonies and symbols which constitute a unity that transcends internal conflicts.¹⁶⁵ By 1885, the themes of loyalty to the Crown and to civil and religious freedoms became the sacred values of the Protestant community in Ulster. Though contrasting views might well have persisted within that community, Conservative Protestant ideology became 'the shared sense of history and destiny' with the implicit political agenda of maintaining Protestant power, protecting Britain's place within the Empire and preserving the Protestant way of life. Eventually, previously controversial

¹⁶³ Walker, '1641', p.59.

¹⁶⁴ P. Mitchel, *Evangelicalism and National Identity*, p.134.

¹⁶⁵ R. Linder R. Pierard, *Civil Religion and the American Presidency* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1988), pp.22-23; G. Parsons, *Perspectives on Civil Religion*, Religion Today: Tradition, Modernity and Change (The Open University, 2002), pp.5-6.

Conservative rituals became representative of the Protestant community as a whole and internal differences became secondary to achieving the set goals.

This holding together of differing worldviews was not unique to Protestant Ulster. Will Herberg made the point that immigrants to America were able to reach beyond their own identities and beliefs to a broader collective commitment to the values and beliefs of the American way of life.¹⁶⁶ Moreover, it is evident that there were both conservative and liberal versions of American civil religion. In the same vein in nineteenth-century Ulster, conservative values upheld tradition and a 'divinely appointed role in the world' whereas liberal values were more akin to justice and liberty.¹⁶⁷ Nonetheless, Reformation Protestantism, the liberty and freedoms of the Williamite revolution and the concept of Union with Britain were the common values of both liberal and conservative Protestants.

The ideology of civil religion, in common with the civil religion of America and Great Britain included ideas of sacrifice and patriotism. It was not surprising that Ulster later embraced the British rituals, centred on the Cenotaph, after their losses at the Somme in 1916. It can be perceived as not only a counter-weight to the commemorative events relating to the Easter Rising but as a further link in the chain of narrative events that constructed the mythology of Unionism. These included the sacrifice of the siege that was prominently displayed in the rituals of Orangeism and those of the Apprentice Boys that developed in the period under review. This emphasised sacrifice on behalf of Great Britain and again reaffirmed their British identity which was crucial to their worldview.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁶ W. Herberg, *Protestant, Catholic, Jew. An essay in American religious sociology* (Garden City, New York: Anchor 1955).

¹⁶⁷ Parsons, *Perspectives on Civil Religion*, p.3.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p.60.

The siege narrative highlights Protestant martyrdom from the establishment of Protestantism at the Reformation, from Luther's dissent, the burning of Latimer and Ridley, the violent rebellion of 1641 and the Cromwellian campaign to restore Protestant security. Their centrality in commemoration was emphasised by Drew's lecture at the 'Martyrs' Commemoration Meeting at the Down Protestant Association in 1855.¹⁶⁹ The mythology that developed from these historic events, when taken collectively, provided the prelude to the resistance at Derry and support for the Williamite campaign. The emphasis was on the threat of Roman Catholicism and the legitimacy of resistance, a threat which encompassed England, Scotland and Ireland and inter-related the three countries.¹⁷⁰ Central to the ideology was opposition to the 'other'.

In ritual, the historical imagery of the Derry commemorations and that of the Orange Order was complemented by the imagery of the Royal Black Preceptory which related to the idea of a chosen people.¹⁷¹ The idea of a chosen people was not confined to Ulster. The prominence of the God of Israel, an austere God (God the Father) of law, order and covenant, as opposed to the God of love and forgiveness, was common to the civil religion of America. This God actively involved himself in history showing favour to the faithful and his wrath to those who did not maintain their role in the covenant.¹⁷² This was the God of the conservative evangelical. It was the ideology of the conservative that enabled the binding together of a civil religious concept in Ulster.

Though the applicability of civil religion to Ulster has been open to question, an argument could be made that the civil religion that united Ulster Protestants had

¹⁶⁹ *DP*, 19 Oct. 1855.

¹⁷⁰ Jarman, *Material Conflicts*, p.182.

¹⁷¹ See Chapter 4, pp.248-9.

¹⁷² *Religion Today*, ed. by Mumm, pp.101-2.

not only the sacred texts, sacred places, ritual calendar and sacrificial martyrs but also had the characteristics identified by Pierard and Linder. The fact that it intensified the divide between Protestant and Catholic communities while effecting a unification of Protestantism challenges Bellah's model. However, no representation of civil religion is perfect – the concept provides material for constant debate.¹⁷³ Even in the original American model, there were elements of society that were excluded. Black Americans and American Indians, for example, were excluded from a place of honour in the mythology. The British model failed to unite those who saw the inter-war years as exploitative socially and economically and who regarded imperialism as corrupt.¹⁷⁴ Moreover, while it united particular communities within Northern Ireland, it failed to unite others.¹⁷⁵

However, the situation in Ulster in the late nineteenth century was a greater departure and this was, to a marked extent, a result of the nature of evangelical religion. The 'no compromise' outlook, backed by the confidence of belonging to a 'chosen people', meant divisions in society were set in rigid terms. Opposing Irish nationalism was not merely a political decision but a religious necessity.

Stemming from the 1860s a form of civil religion evolved, emanating from Loyalism, and changed the character of the commemorations. These were no longer mainly based on constitutionalism but were increasingly defined in terms of religion. The combined marches of the loyalist orders displayed the culture of a shared history, traditions and values by means of ritual and symbol and these reflected the worldview of the evangelical.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷³ Parsons, *Perspectives on Civil Religion*, p.4.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p.59.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p.60.

¹⁷⁶ Jarman, *Material Conflicts*, p.166.

Civil Religion and the City

In applying the five characteristics identified by the historians Richard Pierard and Robert Linder to Londonderry, rather than to Ulster as a whole (though, in this respect, Ulster does focus on Londonderry) it is again necessary to concentrate on the unification of the Protestant community. The divisions that existed between the Roman Catholic community and that of the Protestants by the mid 1880s could not be subsumed within an overarching identity. The Protestant community, however, prone as it was to divisions, by this point, shared a sense of common history and destiny and this was expressed in the language of the conservative evangelical and in the imagery of the siege in the ritual marches.

In the sermons and speeches of commemoration anniversaries much emphasis was placed on the co-operation between Anglicans and Presbyterians during the siege and this common bond was projected as the ideal in times of friction within the Protestant community. In 1868, for example, when many Liberal Presbyterians supported the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland, Rev. Richard Babington emphasised the need for unity. This was evident in the presentation of the resolution proposed at the meeting on 14 August when such unity had been achieved only between Churchmen and Conservative Presbyterians:

That, regarding the Bible as the only sure basis of the Protestant religion, and the only true guide of Churches and States, and considering that Protestants of differing denominations derive their instruction from its pure sources; remembering also with delight that at the ever-memorable defence of Derry, Churchmen and Presbyterians, brothers in suffering and endurance, and brothers also in glorious victory, worshipped together in the same venerable Cathedral, in which today we returned thanks to Almighty God for the great Relief, we their descendants, a united Protestant phalanx, on this day of immortal memory hereby express our continued and fervent

attachment to Protestant union, feeling convinced that with the Divine blessing, it will prove, as of old, a tower of strength, mighty to resist the numerous evil combinations of a degenerate and unprincipled age.¹⁷⁷

The perception that the Protestant community was in many respects chosen by God related the society to a realm of ultimate meaning. This covenantal view of society was an aspect of both Anglican and Presbyterian self-belief within the community.¹⁷⁸ Being special was implicit in the idea of being chosen by God and seeing society as an integrated whole was something that was encouraged by evangelicalism and ultimately achieved by the threat of home rule. There had been divisions in the Presbyterian community along political lines in the preceding years and this was regarded as an abomination by those who took part in the civic rituals.¹⁷⁹ They felt that Protestants should work together to oppose the error of Roman Catholicism, not to collaborate in the way Liberal Presbyterians had been wont to do in political matters. The beliefs, values, rights, and symbols that were displayed in the ritual processions reflected this and a sense of overarching unity transcending internal differences was underway by the mid 1880s.

By 1884, there were some indications of reconciliation. There was reference by Capt. Stevenson in the Apprentice Boys' meeting to some Liberals changing their opinions on Liberal policy and promising to 'compromise matters in future', meaning to go against the party line on home rule. He had encouraged the Liberals to approach the Conservatives.¹⁸⁰ Overall, an argument could be made that the ceremonial in Londonderry might reasonably constitute a Protestant civil religion if it is accepted that such a concept can be applied to a city.

¹⁷⁷ LS, 14 Aug. 1868.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 17 Aug. 1860 (sermon Rev. Francis Smith) and 15 Aug. 1865 (sermon Rev. R. C. Donnell).

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 20 Dec. 1879 (speech Rev. R. C. Donnell).

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 20 Dec. 1884.

Gerald Parsons believes that it can and in recent studies applies these characteristics to the Italian city of Siena. He maintains that the concept of civil religion is not necessarily either modern or Anglo-Saxon as the civic rituals of the city states of late medieval and renaissance Italy qualified according to the criteria of Pierard and Linder. He argues that the civil religion of Siena drew extensively on its traditions of earlier eras to the extent that it was impossible to understand the details without considerable knowledge of Siena's past.¹⁸¹ The idea of Sienese society as an integrated whole despite the division of the city into seventeen *contrade*, or neighbourhoods, each with its own distinct view of history and identity, held firm since they were as integrated with the whole as compartments in a box. There was also an overarching sense of identity that invoked *contrada*, city and state. Beliefs, rights, values, symbols and ceremonies were evident in the rituals of the *Palio* (the twice yearly horse race between the *contrade*) and the traditions which surrounded it gave rise to a particular Sienese worldview.

It might be assumed that comparing and contrasting Gerald Parsons's findings with aspects of Protestant culture would not be particularly helpful considering the many inevitable differences when ceremonies associated with Reformation religion are looked at in proximity to Catholic, Latin festivals. This assumption reflects the nature of both. Whilst Catholicism has the flexibility to 'go native' Protestantism has much less of a capacity to do so.¹⁸² This is illustrated by the Latin festival comfortably accommodating religious ritual and folk religion whilst Protestantism, as a rule, did not. However, commemoration appeared to fall into a separate category for conservative Protestants in the period under review.

¹⁸¹ Parsons, *Perspectives on Civil Religion*, p.136.

¹⁸² D. Martin, *The Explosion of Protestantism in Latin America in Global Religious Movements in Regional Contexts*, ed. by J. Wolffe, (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2002), p.256.

The *Londonderry Standard*, organ of the traditional and Liberal Presbyterians, in 1875 illustrated their view of Orange marches by likening them to 'Protestant Popery'.¹⁸³ This underlined the dislike of religious ritual common to Low Churchman and Presbyterians. The concept of religion for such might be represented by a separate circle enclosing the Word of God, unsullied by any popular demonstration. The conservative Protestant's idea of commemoration is more akin to two concentric circles with religion in the inner sanctum. The Word was surrounded in the outer circle by Protestant activism, political and religious, representative of the soldiers of the Cross, taking a stand against Rome and protecting Protestantism. The symbols and banners represented the tribes who remembered their covenant and gave honour to God, as represented by Mr. Frackleton's speech at the illegal Orange muster on Johnston's Ballykilbeg estate in 1866.¹⁸⁴ For those involved in commemoration, the two aspects were inextricably linked. The ritual practice of loyalist marches fell into a separate category and had a religious significance yet it incorporated religious ritual and folk traditions. This ambivalence was highlighted by the significance of the cathedral in its rituals. It not only housed the commemoration service but also historic artefacts.

A bomb case, which had carried terms of surrender, had been fired from the enemy into the city. This has been kept in the sacred space of the cathedral, albeit in the porch. In the chancel were the flags captured from the French regiments fighting on the side of James II. Of particular significance was the inclusion of new picture windows in the north aisle in the 1861-62 renovations. The first window was in honour of Rev. George Walker, Governor of Londonderry at the time of the siege. He was represented by the three Israelite warriors,

¹⁸³ G. Peatling, Whatever happened to Presbyterian radicalism? p.160; *Londonderry Standard*, 10 Jul. 1875.

¹⁸⁴ *DR*, 14 Jul. 1866; F. Wright, *Two Lands on One Soil*, p.341.

Joshua, Caleb and Gideon clad in armour and carrying weapons contemporary to the siege thus linking ideas of claiming the Promised Land with the representation of the warrior priest. The Episcopal arms, the Walker crest and the city's arms appeared underneath the figures. The inscription read 'In memory of the illustrious George Walker, A.D. 1868.'¹⁸⁵ Thus Walker and the siege participants are represented as 'chosen people'. The subject of the second window was the Apostle Paul preaching to the philosophers at Athens. St. Paul, with his link to conversionism, was a figure of great inspiration to evangelicals.

There had been strong opposition to a new chancel being built as the original historic building was viewed as sacrosanct.¹⁸⁶ Yet the picture window, generally an anathema to evangelicals, was welcomed. Such ambivalence allowed the uniting of the 'historical and civic' celebration to the religious dimension reflecting more interaction than might otherwise have been expected in conservative Protestantism.

The *Corteo dei Ceri et dei Censi* occurs within the August civil celebration in Siena. This involves civic dignitaries, *contrade* and private citizens carrying candles of varying value in procession and into the cathedral as offerings. It also includes the resubmission of the city, and the towns and estates feudally linked to Siena, to the Virgin. As such this particular ceremony has been called the highest and most important event in the religious life of the city while being at the same time that of most political significance.¹⁸⁷ The Londonderry church processions carried flags and banners which commemorated faith and sacrifice and divine

¹⁸⁵ BNL, 16 Apr. 1862.

¹⁸⁶ See Chapter 2, p.133.

¹⁸⁷ Parsons, *Siena*, p.2.

intervention. These acted as both a religious statement and a desired political alignment for the Protestant community.

On the bicentennial anniversary of the closing of the gates, the flags captured during the siege were returned to the chancel, their silk having been renewed by the ladies of the diocese. Mrs. Alexander presented them to the mayor, who gave them to the governor of the Apprentice Boys, who handed them to the Dean with the words 'we commit (these) to your charge to put within the chancel of our venerable cathedral'. The Dean answered 'I accept with pleasure these flags as tokens of our thankfulness to Almighty God for the blessings vouchsafed to this city two hundred years ago'. The flags were then taken by the choristers and placed one on each side of the communion table.¹⁸⁸

Though the commemorations were divided into different sections, some within religious space (the religious service), and others outside it, the flags and insignia reflecting the secular aspect of the commemoration were carried into the cathedral and the secular political meetings following the service had clerical input and were regarded by some as having as much a religious function as any other service held that day.¹⁸⁹ This reflected the developing religio-politicism of the evangelicals involved.

Whilst the commemorations had a certain fluidity about secular and religious aspects, they had also the popular attributes of bands and, in the December event, the burning of the effigy of Lundy. Such attributes fitted together with the traditions of the clubs involving touching the gates, walking the walls and the initiation of

¹⁸⁸ LS, 20 Dec. 1888.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 20 Dec. 1861, See Chapter 4, p.252.

members that had to be carried out within the walled city. These accorded with the traditions of the *contrade* which fitted more generally into the folk festivals of the medieval roots of Sienese culture.¹⁹⁰ The traditions of both cities had their roots in earlier periods, devotion to the Virgin and popular Orangeism, and went through periods of change and realignment in response to political changes. Cults developed: that of the Virgin as a result of perceived direct intervention; the cult of William which perceived William as being the instrument of God's hand. Both became central to the civil religion of the cities. Both cities had a blend of official and unofficial religion in their ceremonies, the official centring on the cathedrals which had their own roles in tradition. Siena had a link through the ages to the devotions to the Virgin dating from the thirteenth century; Londonderry had its link to the siege when Anglicans and Presbyterians sheltered and prayed together and cannons were fired from its roof. However, the aspects which were most important to the development of civil religion relate to the mythology.

The civil religion of Siena is arguably unique among Italian cities and former city-states. The early festivals of the Sienese city states, connected to the city's patron saints, and the cult of the Virgin Mary were generic in medieval Italy. The rituals usually involved elaborate civic processions with candles and banners. They were generally a reassertion of the relationship between the medieval cities and subject towns. However, over time the majority of these civic festivals became obsolete, in part due to the intervention of the Catholic Church which disapproved of the civic side of such festivals, and also to the fact that many independent city states were absorbed into larger regional states thus shearing the traditional links.¹⁹¹ Siena was an exception and it owed a major part of its longevity of its traditions

¹⁹⁰ Parsons, *Perspectives on Civil Religion*, p.193.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pp.177-8.

and ritual to the myth of Montaperti. This was because a fully fledged civil religion developed from the perceived special relationship between the Virgin and the Sienese.¹⁹²

Like the siege myth in Londonderry, perceived divine intervention was the defining factor, though in the case of Siena it was through the intervention of the Virgin Mary in 1260 when, against all odds, and after a special dedication of the city to the Virgin, the Sienese triumphed over their Florentine enemies. The development of the myth of the Virgin's intervention at Montaperti in 1260 to save the city moved Siena's story beyond the historic past into a realm which invoked implications for the destiny of a favoured people and linked it to a realm of ultimate meaning. This gave every reason for the city to regard itself as special. This belief was the starting point for a form of civil religion for both cities. In the case of Siena, regular annual reaffirmation, even in times of difficulty when faith in that special relationship might be tested – for example, Siena's subjugation to Florence – assured survival and continuity. This came later for Londonderry. The myth of the siege of Londonderry had a subtext of God's intervention to save the city. However, it was not until the 1860s, when the evangelicals redefined the myth and developed it beyond its historic role, that a form of civil religion began to emerge. They gave it its full religious context and reaffirmed it by the twice yearly commemorations.

A significant parallel with Siena was the 'invention of tradition' which took place from the 1860s to the early decades of the twentieth century. In Londonderry, the period of greatest significance was from 1860 to 1885 when machinery was in operation to reinvent a local tradition, albeit one that had a central place in

¹⁹² Ibid., p.137.

Protestant mythology, in terms of a religiously based identity that not only represented the city but embraced all of Ulster. In Siena, in the same period, a considerable reinvention took place that embraced Siennese identity, its independence from Florentine political control and enthusiasm for the new Italian state.¹⁹³ It began with a commitment to the new state in 1859, the renaming of streets and public places to reflect the new Italy, and the renaming of the Campo (its 'sacred place') in honour of the new king of the now unified Italy. This new enthusiasm was, however, countered by observing the established traditions of Siena and new emphasis was given to recovering past traditions, reflected in the passion for medievalism.¹⁹⁴ In the late 1870s, the resulting change of costume for participants in the *Corteo Storico* – the two hour historical parade that precedes each *Palio* – reflected this passion. The determination was to balance the best of new and old and carry it forward into the future.

Important to both Londonderry commemorations and the *Palios* of Siena were the silk flags and banners or *drappelloni* that displayed identity. Two new *drappelloni* were produced each year for the *Palio* and were themselves powerful expressions of civil religion. They embodied and provided access to the 'sense of *Senesità*' (roughly translatable as a sense of Siennese-ness) that was regarded as integral to Siennese identity, culture and tradition. This was achieved by depicting the Virgin, the Siennese 'civic pantheon' and the history of Siennese civil religion. Depiction of other aspects of Siennese history and the fabric and symbols of the city, *contrade* and *Palio* itself were also included.¹⁹⁵ In Londonderry, banners were similar works of art; however, God was not depicted. The imagery remained civic and historical.

¹⁹³ Parsons, *Siena*, p.61.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.60-2.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.144.

Nonetheless, the religious context that related to divine intervention was no less integral to the city's identity.

There was a significant difference in the public reaction to the banners of the Apprentice Boys and those of the *contrade* in that they never became objects of ritual acts. As soon as the Sienese *drappelloni* were revealed to the public, they became objects of devotion. Banners had a different function. They operated on two levels, acting as mnemonic devices for members, perhaps reflecting the stories connecting with their initiation into the clubs and lodges, and on a more general level for the casual observer.¹⁹⁶ Those that held images related to the siege such as the cathedral, the walls, the breaking of the boom, and key personages. The image of Governor Walker was featured on the 1876 Browning club banner.¹⁹⁷ The majority of the flags in the formative period appeared to carry insignia such as club crests, crowns and union jacks.¹⁹⁸ Examples of insignia might be the bastion for the Baker club, a cannon for the Campsie club, the ship *Mountjoy* for the Browning club, the Walker family crest for the Walker Club. This practice was becoming established in 1849 and was still prevalent in 1944. The traditional style did not disappear in favour of more lavish displays but there was marked development.¹⁹⁹

In August 1879, the Britannia Brass Band carried a crimson banner with the name of the band, flanked by union jacks. The crest of the Apprentice Boys' society featured the arms of the city – a shield with bastion and skeleton topped by the Irish society flag (the society that was instrumental in the early plantation of the area) surrounded by crimson and blue flags, crown, cannon and weaponry and the

¹⁹⁶ Jarman, *Material Conflicts*, p.167.

¹⁹⁷ LS, 19 Dec. 1876.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 13 Aug. 1878.

¹⁹⁹ Milligan, *Murray Club*, pp.20, 44; LS, 13 Aug. 1875, 13 Aug. 1878.

words 'vita, veritas, victoria'.²⁰⁰ The banners built up a cumulative image that related to the history of the city – faith, resoluteness and action was the motto. They became more common from the 1860s; before that period mainly flags were carried. By 1879, there were eight local clubs with distinctive flags and crimson banners of their order.²⁰¹ From the 1880s, the banners became a component in the wider imagery that related to a Protestant Ulster. For example, in August 1880, the Shankill Belfast Orange Lodge marched in the procession with a purple and orange banner with a scene from the Royal Bastion when the relief ships were first sighted.²⁰² Had this scene been encased in crimson, it would have related the image directly to the Derry commemoration but when it was surrounded with the purple and orange border, as it was in this case, it related to Derry in the wider context of Ulster mythology. Similarly, the banner of the Black Preceptory No. 175, borne in the Derry commemoration of 1890, was of crimson silk adorned with blue ribbons bearing the inscription 'King David's RBP no. 175, City of Belfast. This linked Derry to the wider context of Ulster Protestants as God's chosen people.²⁰³ The union jacks linked to Britain and the Protestant Empire. In a similar vein, the imagery of the Sienese *drappelloni* incorporated heraldic reference to the monarchy within the coats of arms of the *contrade* symbolically binding them to a wider Italy.²⁰⁴ A final comparison might be the fact that in both cities, two commemorative events were planned each year. The amount of preparation for one alone was significant. Planning for two yearly events showed the commitment of both cities to their narrative and their desire to commemorate.

²⁰⁰ LS, 13 Aug. 1889.

²⁰¹ Ibid., 14 Aug. 1879.

²⁰² Ibid, 14 Aug. 1880.

²⁰³ BNL, 13 Aug. 1890.

²⁰⁴ Parsons, *Siena*, p.74.

Conclusion

The concept of the 'invention of tradition' could reasonably be applied to the development of commemoration in the period between 1860 and 1885. The earlier traditions that existed in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century had a constitutional and monarchical base and affirmed the status quo. The term 'reinvention', as applied to Siena, could perhaps be the most accurate description since earlier customs were adapted and put to different use. But such 'reinvention' is included within Hobsbawm's criteria. He states that new traditions could be grafted onto older ones, reinforcing both. From the 1860s there was a pronounced change of emphasis following the involvement of evangelical religio-political protagonists. William Johnston in particular was engaged in the reinvention process and, under his aegis, religion came centre stage. The emphasis changed from supporting what had been established constitutionally to protesting against perceived undermining of the constitution. Equally important was the necessity to protect Protestant principle and the future of Protestant religion and the need for Protestant unity. Further, Londonderry became the focus for Ulster in the bid to project the ideas of upholding principle and identity, its association with perceived divine intervention contributing significantly to the concept of Ulster's 'chosen people'. The pattern of ritual development in the same period reflected this as religion, history and politics were combined seamlessly to establish and maintain a united Ulster Protestant identity. This identity was commemorated and reinforced in a manner that bore little resemblance to earlier periods.

The concept of 'civil religion' also has applicability to Ulster. What was established in the mid to late nineteenth century, however, challenges Bellah's model in that while it united it also divided. The Ulster Protestant population came together

despite integral differences but, by fixing identity in evangelical terms, any genuine interaction with Roman Catholics was precluded. The evangelical Conservatives established themselves in opposition to the 'other', earlier divisions between these communities were reinforced, political pressures in this period, especially the perceived threat of Irish nationalism, adding further emphasis.

The concept can similarly be applied to the city of Londonderry with the same qualification. It divided while it united. Civil religion only became a reality from the 1860s when the historical myth was re-established in an evangelical religious context. As in Siena, perceived divine intervention raised the civic to a higher level, linking the destiny of a favoured people to a realm of ultimate meaning. This gave every reason for the city to regard itself as special and for it to become a central focus for Ulster. The imagery of the banners and the reinforcement of regular commemoration helped to establish such an identity and the symbolism of the other loyalist orders helped to relate it to Protestant Ulster, Britain and the Empire. As with the concept of evangelicalism itself, 'invention of tradition' and 'civil religion' were clearly discernable but transfigured by the religious and political realities of the area.

Proclamation by Lord Lieutenant, 18 December 1871

By the Lord Lieutenant-General and General Governor of Ireland.

A Proclamation.

"SPENCER – Whereas, the Mayor and other magistrates of the city of Londonderry have made requisition to us for a large civil and military force in order to preserve and prevent a violation of the peace on the 18th instant, on which day diverse persons contemplate holding certain assemblies, processions, and displays in the said city; and whereas assemblies, processions and displays of a similar character have on former occasions led to, and resulted in, serious breaches of the peace in the said city, and produced animosity and ill-will between diverse and large numbers of Her Majesty's subjects in the said city and its neighbourhood; and whereas we have reason to believe that any such assemblage, procession or display on the said 18th is calculated to lead to, and will be productive of, serious breaches of the peace and riot, and also of ill-will and animosity amongst Her Majesty's subjects in the said city and neighbourhood: now we, the Lord Lieutenant-General and General-Governor of Ireland, in order to prevent any violation of the peace of the said city and neighbourhood, and to preserve and maintain good-will among Her Majesty's subjects, do hereby strictly caution and forewarn all persons whomsoever, that they do abstain from taking part in, or encouraging or inciting to any such assemblage, procession, or display as aforesaid in the said city of Londonderry, or in, on or about the walls thereof. And we do hereby give notice that, if in defiance of this our proclamation, any such

assemblage, procession, or display shall be attempted or take place, all persons taking part in same or encouraging or inciting thereto, will be proceeded against according to the law. And we do hereby order and enjoin all magistrates and officers entrusted with the preservation of the public peace, and all others whom it may concern, to aid and assist in the due and proper execution of the law, in preventing any such assemblage, procession, or display as aforesaid and effectually dispersing and suppressing the same, and detecting and prosecuting all persons who, after this notice, shall offend in the respects aforesaid.

Given at the Castle of Dublin, &c.

(Signed),

"T. H. Burke"

The number of restrictions in a proclamation varied. An example from August 1870 appears below.

Proclamation

By Mayor and Magistrates

'Whereas we have received information that a large number of persons are likely to assemble on tomorrow, 12 August, this is to give notice that the police have received instructions not to allow crowds to remain stationary and to keep thoroughfares free of obstruction. Notice is hereby given that no band of music will be permitted to play through the streets after 6 p.m.

Order of Procession

Division of Apprentice Boys,
City Flags
Britannia Flute Band with Bannerettes
The Governor and leading members
Crimson Flag and Friendly Societies
Banners
Honorary Members and Chaplains
Londonderry Protestant Defence Association with their Flag
Members of AB of Derry Club with Crimson Flag
Walker Club with Crimson Flag
Williamite Club accompanied by Blue Flag
Baker Club with Blue Flag
'No Surrender' Club with Crimson Flag and Bannerette
Murray Club with Blue Flag
Protestant Friendly Society's Flag
Delegation from Belfast
Delegation from Tyrone
Coleraine Protestant Band
Crimson Flags and Mottoes
Newtownlimavady Delegation
Crimson and Blue Bannerette and Flags
Delegation from other Rural Districts
Apprentice Boys and Citizens

Belfast Newsletter, 14 Aug. 1869

Appendix 4

The map below gives an idea of the extent of the marches during the 1870s. The black line outlines the city walls to which the parades were confined in the early nineteenth century. The red line indicates the route marched in August 1876. The purple line represents the August 1878 route.

Map of Londonderry



CONCLUSION

Evangelicalism played a significant role within Ulster Protestantism in the period between 1859 and 1886. However, its effect was not always easily identifiable. It gave an edge to convictions, consequently, differences could be exaggerated or minimised depending on the circumstances. A common denominator was the drive to action. In particular, evangelicalism acted either as a catalyst to provoke change or, for example, in the case of Loyalism and Orangeism, became itself hybridised. Hybridisation resulted because similar aspects in the separate concepts, such as Protestant unity, reinforced one another. Thus a third concept was generated with reinforced qualities, such as evangelical Orangeism.

The hybridising effect of evangelicalism was demonstrated by its effect on the anti-Catholicism of settler ideology present in the loyal orders. It became virulent and the potency came from the combination of religious beliefs and values as well as from the earlier predisposition. The emphasis remained more on the papacy than on individuals, Roman Catholics being seen more as victims than enemies, in theory at least. Opposition to Irish nationalism and to diminishing Protestant influence was carried out mainly in the field of politics, but the underlying religious issues were by no means superficial; quite the reverse. Anti-Catholicism reflected deep theological convictions as well as Protestant vulnerability. However, the inherent strands of anti-Catholicism in settler ideology and evangelicalism reinforced one another producing a hybridised strand that was particularly resilient.

Its presence within Loyalism was nurtured by an evangelical faction, typified by characters such as William Johnston and Thomas Drew, who projected an evangelical version of Orange principles that encouraged activism in the

propagation of Protestantism and supported the concept of evangelical mission along with Protestant defence. This dual goal, typical of Ulster Loyalist evangelicalism, was illustrated by the Presbyterian minister Robert Donnell's belief that religion could only prosper by holding its own ground while advancing into that of the enemy.¹ The evangelical impulse to hold ground mirrored the need to maintain hegemony to ensure defence that was an aspect of settler ideology.

The determination to commemorate was for many an illustration of evangelical commitment. With a worldview that combined providentialism and covenantalism, demonstrating faith and acknowledging divine deliverance was of great consequence. For those commemorating the siege, the biblical idea of a chosen people was overlaid by the historic narrative of divine favour. This reinforced the importance of fulfilling the duty to demonstrate gratitude. This was further highlighted in the period of great evangelical enthusiasm in the Revival. Though the Revival period was significant for the number of religious ceremonies, the secular event was threatened by the introduction of the Party Emblems Act in 1860 and this encountered evangelical resistance.

Another factor related to the protection of this 'religious observance', was the importance of Roman Catholic opposition. The papal system was seen as fundamentally in error and covenantal and evangelical obligations required opposition to any papal gain as well as efforts to rescue those perceived to be in thrall. By putting pressure on commemoration, it was believed that an attempt was being made to halt the advance of Protestantism and this demanded resistance.

¹ LS, 22 Dec. 1868.

Protestants were asked to march to thank God for freedom from popish repression.²

Evangelicalism had both a divisive and unifying role within Loyalism. In this context, the presence of convinced evangelicals, in key positions, instilled not only an evangelical ethos but a determination to be true to the demands of individual conscience. Within Orangeism, it contributed to the hiatus in cooperation between the elite hierarchy and the rank and file. In the case of the Apprentice Boys of Londonderry, it translated into a new leadership and direction, and a refusal to accept governmental and hierarchical dictates that were perceived to be errors in judgment, especially when dealing with Roman Catholic demands and the rise of Irish nationalism. This meant that some Liberal members believed that they could no longer function within the organisation despite the effects of the Revival which had enhanced the desire to find common ground across denomination. Conversely, it enabled a more effective unity across denomination and class for those with common Conservative beliefs and values.

Again its unifying and divisive effects can be seen when considering worldview analysis. While there is an argument for one over-arching worldview shared by evangelical groups, there is a stronger one for a variety of worldviews. The former reflected the sharing of principles of the Evangelical Alliance and working on common voluntary initiatives. However, in the period between 1859 and 1885, before the perceived threat of home rule effectively determined a united front across the board, there is evidence for similar but crucially different worldviews within Protestantism and these were influenced by evangelicalism.

² Ibid., 14 Aug. 1879

Evangelicalism functioned within sub groups within Anglicanism and Presbyterianism permeating their worldviews and instilling their beliefs and values with conviction and confidence. The overall effect was either enhanced unity or enhanced disunity, both aspects instilled with a drive to action.

Within Presbyterianism, the two main groups, Liberal and Conservatives had differences that related to dimensions of worldview. Liberal Presbyterians had a more separatist outlook and concentrated their evangelical enthusiasm on revitalising their orthodox community and keeping a measured distance from the Anglican community. Some Conservative Presbyterians, however, prioritised shared aims and visions of Protestant brotherhood, and embraced a more conventional evangelical unity. Within Anglicanism, a high church stance could be complemented with evangelical enthusiasm on issues such as pastoral work and sermon delivery, as in the case of William Alexander, and consequently enable good working relationships with evangelicals.

Conversely, evangelicalism could be divisive by combining confidence and activism, making it more difficult to find common ground over disputed issues. Differing aspects of worldview could also make the divisions more pronounced. In Londonderry, Conservative and Liberal Presbyterians were divided by more than the political dimension as was demonstrated by applying Smart's schema.³ However, the Anglican community found it easier to find common ground within and across denomination and class as long as High Church ritual was kept in check. Differences in eschatology reinforced the divisions. Hempton's description of 'biblical literalism, social and ecclesiastical pessimism, Calvinism, anti-Catholicism, anti-radicalism, anti-rationalism and support for the Established

³ See Chapter 2.

Churches'⁴ might cover multiple variations⁵ but it is a useful description to link Conservative Protestants at this period and divide them from Liberal Presbyterians. The worldviews of Conservative and Liberal may be expressed by political labels but, in fact, reflect a variety of differences.

Religion and politics were tightly inter-related in this period. Politics were an extension of religious beliefs and values, driven by religious ethics and given an edge by evangelical conviction. This combination was clearly seen in the content of the sermons and speeches at the commemorations but it was also a factor in the wider Protestant community. Eschatological beliefs influenced reaction to events and helped form separate ideologies. These helped form different political stances. Differing covenantal perceptions had a further defining influence.

The evangelical drive to activism should not be under-estimated in the conflict that followed within the Protestant community as each group fought in print and in the field of politics for what it believed to be the right course of action for Ulster. Yet these divisions were not so deep that they could not be overcome. Underlying the divisions was a potentially unifying framework of evangelical principles and, in eschatological terms, there was an underlying commonality about the authority of Scripture, conversionism and afterlife.⁶

Comprehensive Protestant unity could become a reality when it was necessary for perceived self-preservation. Evangelical unity already worked effectively across denomination in Conservative Protestantism, particularly within Loyalism. Within this section of the community, evangelicalism strengthened bonds that reflected a

⁴ Hempton, D., 'Evangelicalism and Eschatology', p.191.

⁵ *Protestant Millennialism, Evangelicalism and Irish Society*, p.21.

⁶ A. R. Holmes, 'The Uses and Interpretation of Prophecy', p.163.

common worldview. Johnston's ideology, for example, had much in common with that of Conservative Presbyterian Loyalists. Further unification was possible when the political climate became more threatening. The perceived threat of home rule brought the groups together within Unionism. The divisions were still there but internal issues were subsumed in uniting for the general good.

This was reflected in developments after 1885. From 1892 till 1903, there was a close Liberal - Conservative alliance within Unionism and the parties merged in 1912. From the late nineteenth century, the framework enabling unity provided by Unionism overlaid one already established by evangelicalism. Evangelicalism's complementary framework could now potentially work more effectively when there were fewer obstacles to unity and cohesion, the need to work together having been finally accepted.

It is important that the presence of evangelicalism in Ulster is not seen to be confined to the role of a few high profile clergy. The ministers who spoke at the commemorative events held similar views and these both reflected and reinforced those of the laity. Conservative Presbyterian ministers might be in the minority but there was a significant number of the laity who held Conservative Presbyterian views and found themselves in accord with their Anglican brothers on evangelical and political issues.

Religion permeated the worldview of Ulster Protestants in this period and was woven into the fabric from which cultural identity was formed. The component of Ulster identity established in Londonderry in the 1860s and 1870s, in a form of reinvention of tradition, was part of a bid to establish a presence to mirror rising Irish nationalism in that period and was complemented by other components. The

Orange Order, Black Preceptory and Apprentice Boys association combined in evangelical as well as Orange brotherhood to provide the narratives for a chain of cultural identity. The manifestation of this in the form of parading culture was accepted, if not necessarily embraced by all within Unionism, as an overarching form of identity in the same manner that evangelicalism provided an over-arching world-view for disparate groups within Ulster Protestantism.

The period between 1859 and 1885 was pivotal in the formation of cultural identity and this owed much to the fusion of evangelical and Orange values. Before this period, the anniversaries were relatively low key, local events. The beginning of the period coincided with the Revival which renewed evangelical fervour. The introduction of the strongly evangelical Orangeman, William Johnston, to the Apprentice Boys association from 1860 heralded a new wave of cooperation between the local organisation and the evangelical wing of the Orange Order and resulted in a more Conservative base and a more religio-political agenda. Their opposition to the Party Emblems Act raised their profile in Ulster and membership of the clubs became open to non locals. The danger to the Church of Ireland had implications for the future of Protestantism in Ireland and encouraged strong Conservative Protestant opposition. Joint cause was found with evangelical Orangeism and numbers at commemorations swelled significantly.

Behind the scenes there was considerable religio-political manoeuvring. Strong Liberal and Catholic opposition to the commemorative marches and the organisation's defiance resulted in conflict, publicity and considerable support from the rest of Ulster. The developing parading culture provided an attractive format for showing opposition to home rule. From 1886, branches of the clubs were to

develop in other area of Ulster, the United Kingdom and the Empire. Throughout this period, there was strong evangelical cooperation and impetus.

Civil religion had a role to play in this identity. The narratives that combined the older covenantal aspects that related to the biblical idea of a chosen people were reinforced by the historical narrative of Londonderry as were the historic narratives of Protestant martyrs. It encapsulated the Orange ideals of protecting the Protestant religion, supporting a Protestant monarch, opposing Roman Catholicism and sacrifice. The evangelical ideals of Protestant unity, acting on convictions and keeping faith when times were taxing were also central. The siege of Londonderry provided the kernel of Ulster identity as it embodied the synthesis of Orange and evangelical values.

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